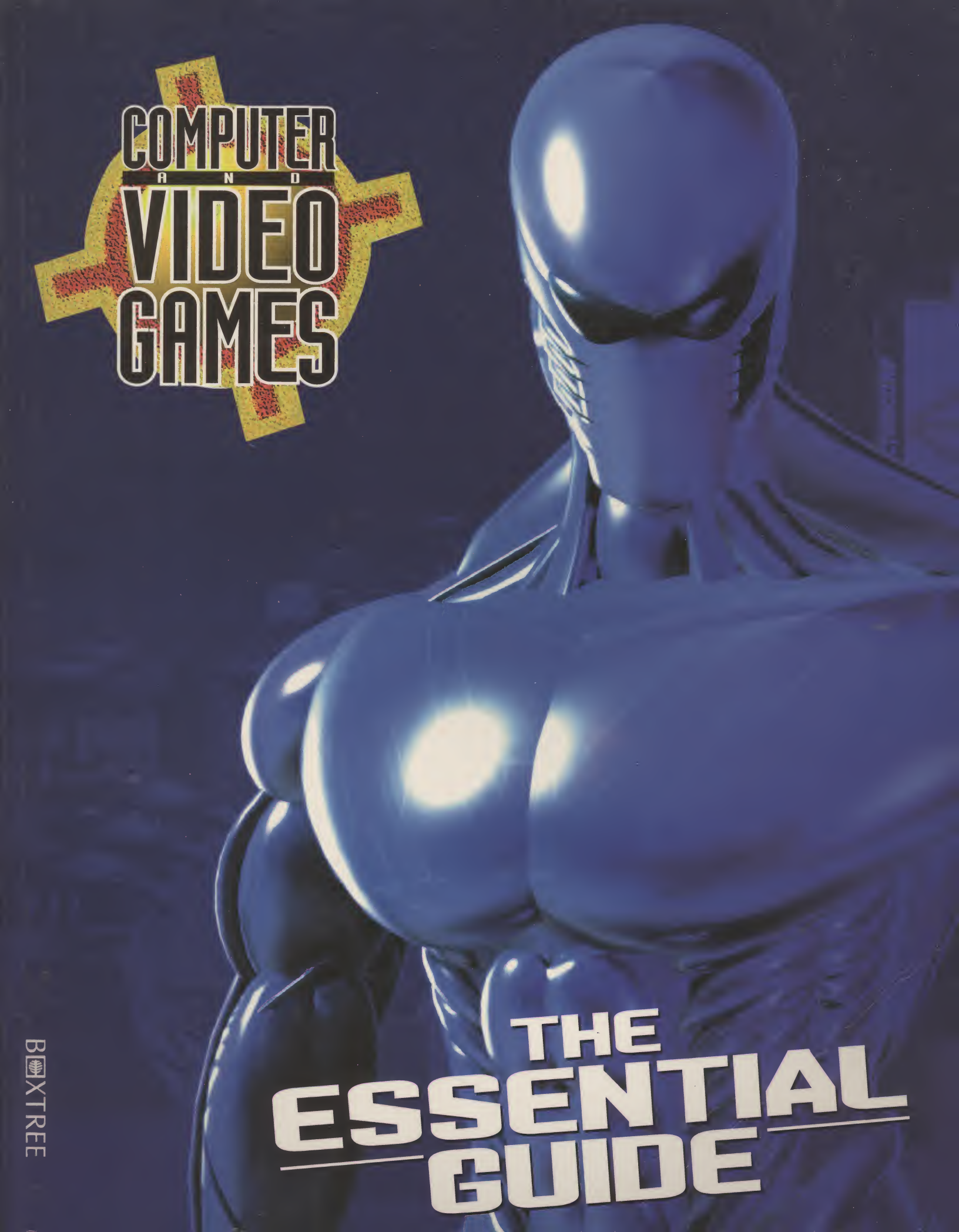
COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

BOXTREE



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GREETINGS

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES & BOXTREE

WELCOME TO

Brought to you courtesy of Boxtree and the Computer and Video Games mag crew, this massive book is designed to give you the full lowdown on everything that's hot and happening in the video games world.

RIGHT PRICES, RIGHT GAMES.

If you're thinking of buying a new machine, you want to be sure it'll play the kind of games you want, so here's our guide to where you can find the right machine for you.

Most people who buy their first games machine, get it home, play the game that comes with it and are satisfied. But if you've been playing games for several years, there's probably a specific genre, whether it's beat 'em ups, RPGs or whatever, that you particularly like. Chances also are you've already got at least one system, so if you're thinking of buying another machine, you have to be certain that it will still give you the games you like plus a whole lot more.

Let's go Carting

Traditionally cartridge-based machines are associated with platform games and beat 'em ups, the Amiga with strategy games and the PC with flight sims. But that's all changed in recent times, with greater diversity across formats and major fluctuations in the quality of software.

If you're a fan of particular type of game, whether it's beat 'em ups or RPGs, it isn't that easy identifying which machine will deliver the quality, and quantity of software you're after. Ten years ago the boundaries were better defined – mainly because of the huge technological differences between machines. Now, with so many formats and so many titles, it's not easy finding right machine that'll play your favourite games.

Arcade Action

The biggest titles in the last few years have been arcade conversions. The Streetfighter series, Mortal Kombat I+II and Virtua Racing have all been massive

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

Over 134 action-packed pages, we fill you in on what's coming up on the exciting and ever-expanding hardware front — helping you to decide which would be the best machine for you and why. We've got dozens of reviews of CVG's top games of the year plus tips aplenty, previews of the tastiest games coming up in the next few months and features galore on varying topics such as Virtual Reality, Internet and an in-depth guide of how to break into the computer games biz — and maybe make yourself a million. All this and much, much more. Dig in and enjoy...

This graph gives you a rough guide of how much you can expect to spend on a new machine — and what sort of software you can expect to get for it.

	Machine hardware retail price	Cost of feeding it with software	Comments and guidelines
£500+	PCs	£14.99-£44.99	Loads of quality software, but you're paying top-end prices.
£250-£400	Jaguar 3DO NEO GEO	£54.99-£69.99 £54.99-£69.99 £99-£169.99	Few titles at the moment, but good quality and varied.
£200-£300	A1200 CD32	£19.99-£34.99 £14.99-£29.99	Large range of varied software. Action games not as good as consoles.
£100	Megadrive Super NES	£39.99-£54.99 £44.99-£69.99	Mainly arcade conversions, plus some strategy games.
Sub-£100	Game Boy Game Gear	£19.99-£34.99 £34.99-£44.99	Cheap and varied software. Good budget purchase.

Key to life and all that...


ADVENTURE GAMES


SHOOT 'EM UPS


SIMULATIONS


COIN-OP CONVERSIONS


PLATFORMS


SPORTS GAMES


BEAT 'EM UPS


PUZZLE GAMES


STRATEGY

hits, and if these sound like your kind of games you'll probably be wanting to get your hands on a console.

Machines such as the Megadrive and Super NES aren't noted for thinking games, instead they boast a massive catalogue of some of the best shoot 'em ups, beat 'em ups and platform games ever assembled. While the action games are slightly better on Super NES, with titles like Super Aleste and Super Contra, the Megadrive has a slightly more varied range of titles, with some excellent adventures such as the Phantasy Star series.

At the other end of the scale lurks the PC which, for many years now, has had a reputation as a machine for serious gamers. Now if you still believe that, you've probably never played games like Doom, Chaos Engine or Mortal Kombat on it. Fair enough,


▲ Doom 2 proves the PC is a stonking platform for shoot 'em ups.

the PC has more than its fair share of flight sims, of which games like Strike Commander and 1942 have to be seen to be believed, and RPGs such as the incredible Ultima series, but the power behind a mid-range 32-Bit PC is greater than most of the new consoles can offer.

On top of all that, there's an add-on board coming soon that lets the PC run 3DO software, with another one planned for Jaguar and CD-i games. It may be the most expensive set-up you can buy, with a minimum outlay of around £900, but you'll be getting by far the most versatile games machine in the world.

Now, right in between these comes a new generation of machines. On the shelves at the moment is the 3DO and Jaguar, and although there hasn't been a vast amount of software released for either machine, the titles that have been released already are certainly impressive.

The Jaguar boasts plenty of arcade-quality titles


▲ Mortal Kombat II is one of the best beat 'em ups on the Super NES.

such as Tempest 2000 and Doom, alongside more strategy orientated games like Alien Vs Predator. On the 3DO, however, many of the early games have been texture mapped race sims, such as the excellent Road Rash or shoot 'em ups like Total Eclipse.

Cheap Shot

However, console games aren't cheap, and a lot of the machines are rather pricey. So if you're strapped for cash, the Amiga 1200 or CD32 is the perfect alternative. Both these machines are very powerful, boast huge catalogues of reasonably priced games and still have plenty of commitment from software companies, despite Commodore's recent problems. While the Amiga can't quite match consoles for action games, some of the best strategy games of all time have come out for the Amiga, along with an excellent range of RPGs, adventures and simulations.

Handhelds are another cheap alternative to more expensive machines. You can now get your mitts on a Game Boy for around £30 with the carts starting at £20. With titles such as Zelda, Tetris and Marioland you can't go wrong.

▼ The Chaos Engine has, unusually, transferred well to most machines.



MACHINE











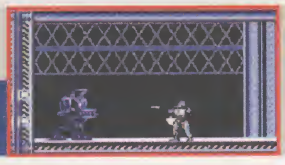
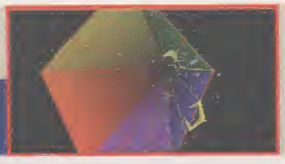










STYLE OF GAME	TYPICAL GAME		UNTYPICAL GAME	
Megadrive		**Sonic the Hedgehog** Platform action seems to be the norm for the Megadrive.		**Populous** There are a few strategy type games for the Megadrive — but not enough.
Super NES		**Street fighter II** This sort of beat 'em up shows the Super NES at its best.		**Theme Park** The Super NES is sadly lacking on the strategy game front.
Amiga		**Secret of Monkey Island 2** The Amiga tends to get involving games these days.		**Statix** Puzzle games like this one are a bit of a rarity for the Amiga.
PC		**Gunship 2000** If flight sims are what you're after, then a PC is the one for you.		**Cannon Fodder** High-action arcade fun is not generally seen on the PC.
Game Boy		**Warioland** Cute platform games — the sort you can play anywhere — are typical for the Game Boy.		**Zelda: Link's Awakening** RPGs are not really a Game Boy thing.
Game Gear		**Robocop Vs Terminator** No brains needed — just blast away.		**Micro Machines** Racing games are scarce — especially simultaneous two-players like this.
CD32		**Sensible Soccer** A perfect platform for shovelware arcade titles.		**Simon the Sorcerer** More upgraded adventures with sampled speech.
CD-i		**Kether** Graphically pleasing games pop up muchly on the CD-i — even if the action in this blast is a little unrewarding.		**Hotel Mario** Not the sort of machine you'd expect to see a platform game on.
3DO		**Crash 'n' Burn** A typical racy shoot 'em up — it's not very good though.		**John Madden's Football** More sports games are in the pipeline.
Jaguar		**Tempest 2000** Original and unusual games like this are the norm up til now.	None as yet...	**Watch this space...**

CONSOLES...

Off with the old and on with the new — the next generation of consoles is here, offering you games like nothing you've ever seen before. Prepare for the future...

The computer gaming world is undergoing a mammoth earthquake of a shake-up, the likes of which it has never seen. Thirteen years ago it was the arrival of colour and sound that heralded "realistic" games. Five years after that came 16-Bit technology, which caused many jaws to drop. But that's the stone-age compared to the generation of super-consoles which are being unleashed on us.

These machines are faster, with realistic graphics and CD-quality sound. The games star big-name Hollywood actors, have budgets that come to more than most of us mortals will earn in a lifetime. And, more than anything, they're damn good fun.

A key weapon in favour of new machines such as 3DO, PlayStation and Jaguar is the wave of discontent with Sega and Nintendo that has swept through software companies the world over. They make games to make money, and the simple fact is, unless your Super NES or Megadrive game hits the top 30, you're not going to see much cash from it. It's not just the high-price of cartridges, they have to pay a royalty on the games they sell and often break their budgets redeveloping games because they've been refused on quality grounds. Although when you look at some of the releases that have cropped up in the last two years, this doesn't seem to be a consistent policy. Which is why they're looking for an alternative system, one which will give them the freedom to design games with less constraints – and without a big brother third-party manager breathing down their necks.

This independence is leading to better games, more powerful machines and, in many cases, lower prices. What we've seen already has impressed us, but that's nothing compared to what's coming your way next year....

THE NEW GENERATION



MEGADRIVE 32X

By:Sega
UK Release: Christmas '94
Price: £199-£249

Sega's first step into the 32-Bit arena is a bit of a strange offering. Rather than a stand-alone console, the 32X plugs into the cartridge slot of existing Megadrives and Multi-Mega's, upgrading their graphics and sound capabilities and boosting their power with a 32-Bit Hitachi processor.

The result is a low-priced, relatively powerful entry-level 32-Bit machine which boasts something none of its rivals can – an instant back catalogue of games thanks to the Megadrive. While it doesn't enhance these games, it still leaves you with plenty to play while waiting for the next batch of releases to wend their way through the development process.

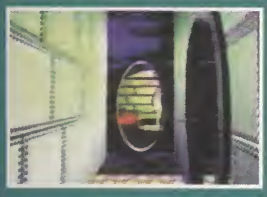
If one thing's for certain, Sega is all out to avoid the problems that have plagued the first 32-Bit consoles – software. Despite having over 150 third party developers for 32X and Saturn, Sega's first releases for both machines will be home-grown products. Sega want to make sure they don't fall into the trap of having low quality, rushed releases when the machine is launched – which is something that tainted peoples early impressions of the Jaguar and 3DO.

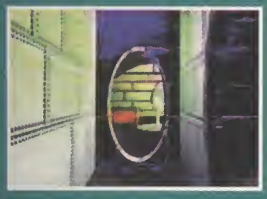
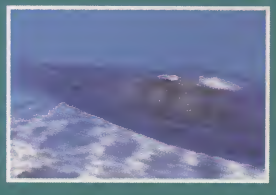
Instead they've spent plenty of time and money developing the first wave of titles to make optimum use of the technology with the aim of blowing the competition out of the water with their very first salvo. We've seen a good deal of software at the recent CES and Tokyo Toy shows and are convinced there's room for both machines alongside the other 32-Bit consoles, especially in the light of Sega's new policy of controlled releases.

It also boosts the capabilities of the long-suffering Mega-CD, providing 32,000 colours on-screen at once, which means more realistic video footage. It's still not known if 32X games will be compatible with Sega's Saturn, though. Oh yes, there's a very good chance that at some point next year we'll see Sonic on 32-Bit, we can only wait and hope...



THE GAMES



Shadow Of Atlantis

This aquatic adventure makes use of the Mega-CD which, combined with the 32X provides full motion video graphics in 32,000 colours.








Virtua Racing Deluxe

The original Megadrive version was a hit, and this is set to go the same way. It's faster than the original, with better graphics, more tacks and two new cars.

Metal Head

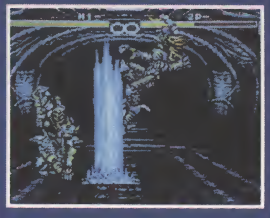
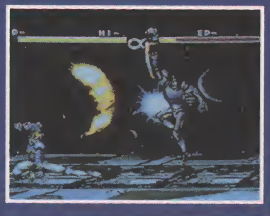
Again, the 32X's polygon-pushing power is called upon, this time to give you control of a giant robot rampaging through cities and battling other equally giant mechanoids.






Cyber Brawl

Virtua Fighter may not be coming out on the 32X, but beat 'em up fans have this little gem to look forward to. Cyber Brawl may not have the 3D but it does have the largest sprites ever seen before

Doom

It's the game which set the PC world alight when it was released — and with good cause. This mega-violent first-person perspective 3D shoot 'em up is mindless, fun and looks very good indeed.



Star Wars Arcade

Based on Sega's 32-Bit Star Wars coin-op, the 32X will actually boast more levels than the original, although the number of polygons which make up the graphics have had to be cut down to preserve the speed. It still looks amazing.







SEGA SATURN

From: Sega
UK Release: Christmas '95
Price: £299 (estimated)

Due to appear in the UK after the 32X is Sega's stand-alone next generation machine, the Saturn. Like the 32X, it makes use of powerful Hitachi processors, with two of the little blighters working simultaneously. It's purely CD-based, but does have a cartridge slot which could be used for an extra RAM unit, which would speed up the machine's ability to read from compact disc.

As with the 32X, Sega is being very cautious when it comes to showing off its software, and so far it's only the games which have been shown to the press. That doesn't mean that nobody's developing for it, dozens of software companies around the world are currently producing Saturn titles, although at the moment Sega's Clockwork Knight is the game that really stands out.

The machine is due for release in Japan at the end of this year, and as such should be available on import in this country around the same time. But a word of warning: if you do buy an import machine, you'll be paying way over the odds and most of the early games will feature Japanese speech and text which will render them almost unplayable to us Brits.

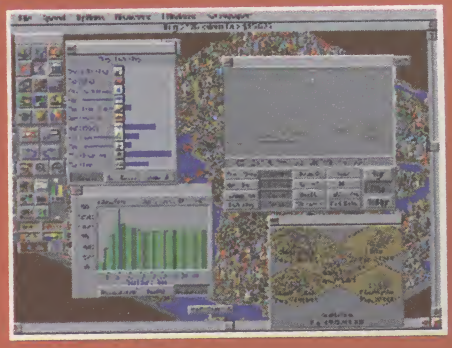


THE GAMES

Blue Seed

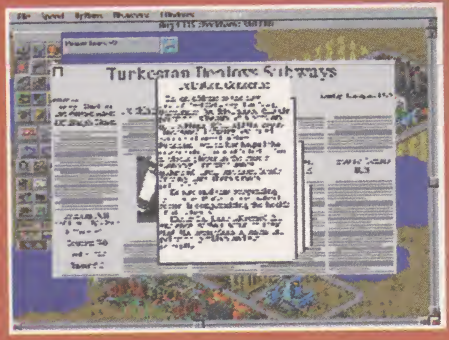
This is another game we might not see in this country. Blue Seed is an RPG pencilled in for release early next year. It's shaping up to be very good, although you'll need to be able to read Japanese to play it.



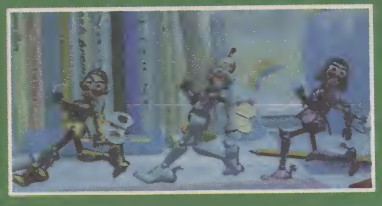


Sim City 2000

The Saturn version of what could well turn out to be PC game of the year should be a conversion of the forthcoming PC CD-ROM version. This features Full Motion Video clips for disasters and other events in the game.









Clockwork Knight

This is one of the first Saturn games we saw, and it really proves what the machine is capable of. It's a platform game set in a toy room where the occupants come to life at midnight to embark on a quest to find their missing mate, Chelsy. The camera panning and multi-layer graphics make this look more like a cartoon than a conventional computer game.





Greatest Nine

A game for hard-core baseball nuts. It looks good, but we'd be surprised if it ever saw a European release. However, it could show up in America, in which case you'll be able to get your mitts on a version with English text.



Dream House

Essentially a conversion of the Mega-CD game of the same name. Although this version looks better and has multiple storylines so the gameplay won't be as linear.





Shinobi X

Sega stalwart Shinobi will also appear on Saturn. The graphics are made up from digitised characters instead of conventional sprites. It's not a revolutionary title, but it looks like it plays very well indeed.



Virtua Fighter

This is the one! Virtua Fighter in all its polygon glory will be coming to the Saturn and our sources tell us that it's going to be almost arcade perfect. However, we also hear that it's going to be a conversion of the original game, not the new Maniax version.

Pebble Beach

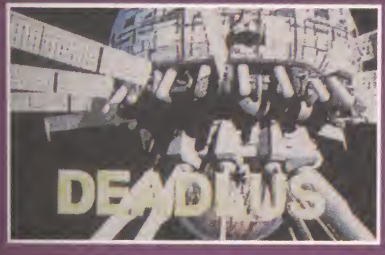
Golf games are hugely popular in Japan, so it's understandable why Sega have one as one of their first Saturn releases. It features digitised characters and courses taken from



Gail Racer

Based on the 1991 coin-op smash Rad Mobile, Gail Racer's fast enough to give Daytona and Ridge Racer a run for their money. Still, the proof is the gameplay and it's far to early to judge that yet.





Deadlus

One of the few shoot 'em ups in development for the Saturn. It's a first person perspective blast which makes full use of the machine's polygon handling capabilities.

Panzar Dragoon

This peculiar shoot 'em up puts you in control of a giant dragon, cruising at around 200 feet over a fantasy world taking pot-shots at other dragons and mythical creatures. It makes use of full 3D texture-mapped with virtual reality 360 degree views.



Chinese Detective

Apparently quite a lot of money has been invested in this detective thriller game. Much of the money was spent on location shoots in Hong Kong. Providing the producers are willing to stump up some cash to have it dubbed into English, this could be a game worth keeping an eye out for.





Victory Goal

When we first featured this it went under the provisional title of Saturn Soccer. Now it's got a real name and it's shaping up to be real good.

Daytona US

Proof, if any were needed, that Daytona US is coming to the Saturn. This demo was on display at the Tokyo toy show earlier in the year. It's still a fair way off completion at this point, but does feature all the speed of the coin-op.







SONY PLAYSTATION

From: Sony
UK Release: Late '95
Price: £299

After three years with Sega and Nintendo dominating the console market, another Japanese giant is about to gain a foothold. This Christmas sees the launch in Japan of Sony's first console, the PlayStation which, on paper at least, is the most technically impressive of all the 32-Bit consoles.

Apart from its speed, its simplicity is something which has attracted many developers. The hardware design is straightforward, which makes it a treat for programmers to work on, so it looks likely that, in the early days at least, the PlayStation could have the upper hand over the Saturn and Ultra-64 when it comes to software.

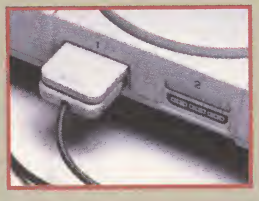
It's not just hype. The games we've seen running on PlayStation are simply amazing, with state-of-the-art graphics and astounding gameplay. Although the Japanese launch is December 9 1994, all the early titles will feature Japanese text and speech, so we recommend that you hold off buying the machine until it's officially released mid-way through 1995.

The console itself is surprisingly small, only about the size of this book in fact. That innocuous casing is completely overshadowed by one of the most complex joypads ever. The top end features two sets of Super NES-style buttons with four more on the front. Despite having more buttons than any conventional joypad, it's actually relatively small and easy to hold. It's not surprising when you consider that ease of use was one of the key elements of the design brief when the machine was being created.

For all its technical excellence, the console still holds one or two comparatively archaic features which have impressed us as much as anything. The designers haven't concentrated solely on polygons, Gourad shading, texture mapping and other such features. They've also managed to incorporate powerful 2D scrolling and sprite functions which, when you consider the number of classic games which could be converted to this system, is very good thing indeed.

It's also a very expandable system. RAM cards can be plugged in letting you save games or characters then take them round to your mate's house and play them on their machine. The RS232C socket will allow multiple machines to be linked up, along with devices such as hard drives, it could also be used to hook a PlayStation up to two monitors for multi-player games.









THE GAMES

Cyber Sled

The third Namco coin-op conversion . for PlayStation. It's a polygon-based blaster which features all manner of giant robots and alien space craft.



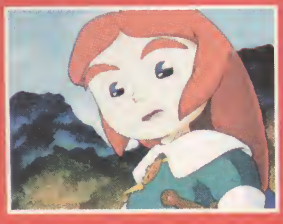


Red Prism

Multi-player robot combat sim which should, with the right cables, let you hook several PlayStations together for multi-player tournaments. If that's the case, this game could be very big indeed.

Tale Of Poporokuroisu

The name makes this promising RPG sound like an East London kebab shop, but in truth this is likely to be one of the strongest titles in the first batch of PlayStation discs.



Ridge Racer

While Sega have Daytona US, the PlayStation will feature a conversion of Namco's Ridge Racer, their excellent texture-mapped arcade driving sim. Early shots show that the home version of the game match the coin-op for graphics, we'll just have to wait and see how the final version matches up for speed.







Ora-164

Despite looking like a normal horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, Ora-164 makes use of multiple graphic planes and high-resolution images to create, potentially at least, a game capable of reviving this flagging genre.



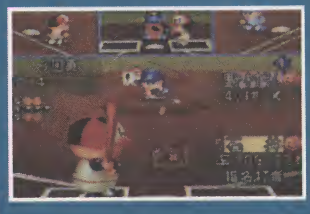
Star Blade Alpha

Another Namco arcade conversion, this one's a 3D blaster which is similar in many ways to Sega's Virtua Star Wars.



Powerful Professional Baseball '95

Big, cute graphics, lots of action and a running commentary plays throughout. It's not likely to be released in Europe though.





Ganbare Morikawa-kun

This strange strategy game has you building robots and solving puzzles. Bizarre, but certainly original.

Race Drivin'

The follow-up to Hard Drivin' could have a tough time when faced with rivals such as Namco's Ridge Racer.



Zero Device

Stunning polygon-based beat 'em up. It's fast, the graphics are detailed and with an infinite number of viewpoints made possible by the PlayStation's realtime modelling hardware.



Blue Forest

Typical Jap-style RPG which will probably be loaded with Japanese text and speech, rendering it unplayable to us Brits.



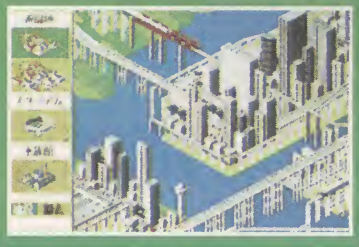
Twin Goddess

Thanks to its compression hardware, double-speed CD drive and large memory buffer, Full Motion Video is a doddle for the PlayStation. And that's exactly what's put into use for this movie-style fantasy combat game.



A-Train IV

While Sim City became a massive hit here, the equally excellent A-Train didn't quite have the same impact. However, it's one of the most popular PC games in Japan, which explains why it's coming to the PlayStation



Formation Soccer

Regarded in Japan as one of the best footy games on the market, this is another title scheduled for release in the first half of 1995.



Ark the Red

It's clear that the programmers have set out to create a different type of RPG with Ark the Red. The onus is as much on action as puzzle solving and exploration, but features a unique interface which should make this game accessible to people who don't normally like this genre.



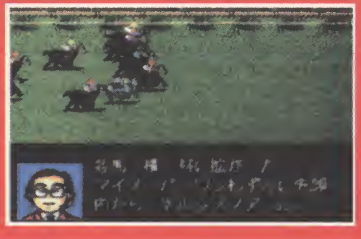
V-Zone

It looks like pinball, but in fact this is a pachinko sim. As the game holds no appeal outside of Japan and Hong Kong, we doubt very much if we'll see an official version of this.



Derby Stallion

A horse racing game doesn't sound the most exciting thing on Earth, but there's one coming to the PlayStation anyhow. Don't expect to see this getting a European release, though.



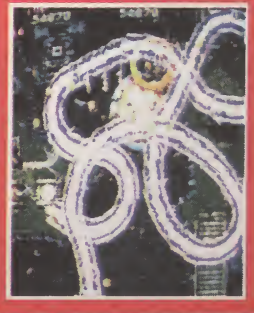
Calliotte's Castle

Based on an obscure Japanese cartoon series, this action adventure is due for a Japanese launch mid-1995.



Raiden

Not getting carried away with the PlayStation's graphic technology, Jap firm Seibu have this vertically scrolling shoot 'em up among their first batch of releases.



Metal Jacket

Awesome-looking Battletech-style game. It looks like being the most graphically impressive of the PlayStation's early releases.





Pori Pori Circus Grand Prix

Ultra-cute comedy race game with cartoon-quality graphics and outrageous tracks. Looks like being one of the most heavily pushed early releases. It certainly looks very good, and it's rumoured to play fantastically well – even better than Stunt Race FX on the Super NES.

3DO

From: Panasonic
Availability: Out Now
Price: £399

After a slow start with software, the 3DO is gradually establishing itself as a serious games machine. Titles such as Road Rash and FIFA International Soccer are proving beyond doubt the gap between 16- and 32-Bit machines.

Despite the software side of things getting off to a sluggish start, we're now seeing some excellent titles which really show off the capabilities of this excellent machine. Road Rash, for instance, is an outstanding example of imaginative programming combined with excellent technical features and some fantastic FMV sequences.

Keeping one step ahead of the game, the 3DO Corporation has also unveiled a 64-Bit booster pack, nicknamed the Bulldog, which can double the power of existing 3DO consoles. Although not released until the end of 1995, the gadget should ensure the 3DO's longevity when faced with the likes of Ultra-64.



THE GAMES

Twisted

It's hard to describe a game as unique as this. Basically, it's a quiz game, but given a gameshow setting, brilliant video sequences, awesome presentation and liberal amounts of humour. There isn't a one-player mode, though, so you'll need some friends on hand to play it.



Alone In The Dark

Although we'd like to have seen this game's sequel on 3DO instead of the slightly dated original, this is still one of the most innovative adventure games in years.



The Horde

This innovative strategy-cum-action game boasts excellent FMV segments and surprisingly addictive gameplay. It was also one of the first official 3DO titles in this country.



Virtuoso

This action/adventure game features you in the 21st Century retreating into a Virtual World. The bulk of the graphics are generated using texture-mapping and it looks very good indeed.



John Madden's Football

Another Megadrive to 3DO conversion, this time it's American football rather than motorbikes which get the 32-Bit treatment. It uses actual digitised players for graphics, as well as the zillions of statistics you'd expect to find in a game like this.



Road Rash

Apart from motorbikes, Road Rash 3DO has almost nothing to do with the Megadrive original. It combines FMV sequences with fantastic texture mapped racing action to deliver the fastest, most action-packed game on the system.



NINTENDO ULTRA-64

From: Nintendo
UK Availability: End of '95/Early '96
Price: £249 (estimated)

With rivals Sega offering two new machines, Nintendo has been almost silent concerning its next project. Earlier in the year, though, the firm unleashed two games on the press designed to run on their new 64-Bit coin-op – which will also be the basis for a home machine.

Although the specifications for the home machine haven't yet been confirmed, the preliminary reports are impressive. To begin with, it uses cartridges rather than CDs, which means it can transfer data faster, and is cheaper to manufacture. The result is a machine, which when it's released in Japan, will retail for under £200. Nintendo is still keeping quiet as to the exact launch date, initial titles and additional features of the home machine, but even with the little information that has been released, it looks like Nintendo could return to the top of the market with this little 64-Bit gem.





Killer Instinct

This ultra-realistic beat 'em up looks like being one of the best combat games ever. The graphics are amazingly realistic, with some stunning effects. For instance, in one scene you can smash your opponent out of a window, chase after him, and carry the fight on in the street. It's stunning.

ATARI JAGUAR

From: Atari
Availability: Out Now
Price: £239

There's no doubting the capabilities of Atari's 64-Bit powerhouse, especially with titles such as Alien vs Predator and Tempest 2000 available.

However, it's currently the only new-wave machine that's cartridge based. The lack of a CD drive has meant Atari has been able to produce a machine that costs £150 less than its nearest stand-alone competitor.

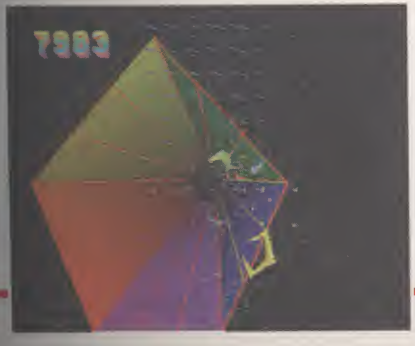
A CD drive is on the way, although there's still no definite release date and so far only one title, Blue Lightening, confirmed as being in development for it. What it will feature, though, is something called a Virtual Light Synthesiser, which plays all manner of weird visual effects in time with any audio CDs you play through it



THE GAMES

Tempest 2000

Programmed by veteran codester Jeff Minter, Tempest 2000 is quite unlike any shoot 'em up you've ever seen before. The graphics are astounding, the action amazingly fast and the music is the best in any cartridge-based game.



Iron Soldier

Nearly every new machine is getting some kind of giant robot game, and the Jag's no exception. Iron Soldier is a polygon-based shoot 'em up which chugs along at an impressive 30 frames per second. It also calls for brain work as you plan your campaigns and devise different tactics for the various battle zones.



Alien vs Predator

This Doom-esque sci-fi shoot 'em up has to be one of the strongest titles on any machine. The graphics are amazing, and as you get to play either an Alien, Predator or Human (lunch) there's plenty of gameplay in there too.



GETTING INTO THE GAMES BIZ

Imagine being paid to do what you most enjoy doing! It could be you if you worked for a computer games company. But just exactly how do you go about getting that dream job?



We all have our day-dreams, don't we? Watch Match of the Day — your team loose 5-0. Surely you could play better than that! Wet, Wet, Wet are on Top of the Pops again — blagh! You could sing better than that! Play Super Kicky-Kicky II on your console. Thirty quid and it's a rip off — you could write something better than that!

Well, you may not get that try-out for United and Dave Waterman's not returning your calls — but getting into the computer games business is easier than you think.

Computer games — just in case you've had your head in a bucket for the past ten years — are big business. And while big business may not always mean big money it certainly does require a hell of a lot of people to actually turn an idea into something you can actually go out into the shops and buy. That means lots of jobs — and you don't have to have a degree in Rocket Science for most of them.

Sure, the actual programming (or coding) of the games requires a fair bit of technical expertise and the drawing of the graphics means you have to be a bit arty, but there are many, many other opportunities in the games biz that require nothing more than the ability to count to 11 without taking your socks off. The only qualification you absolutely must have is a tremendous enthusiasm and passion for games.

If you reckon you've got that then why not have a go? But first let's look at the kind of skills and jobs that are needed to develop a top ranking title. To make it easy to describe, let's split up the process into three stages:

- **Development**
- **Publishing**
- **And — errrr — Other Stuff!**



DEVELOPMENT

This is the bit you probably know something about. The process by which the guys (and — all too rarely — girls) produce the code that eventually gets put onto a disk, cart or CD and sold to you.

The first thing you should know is that it's a pressure business. As a rule, most games — particularly cart games — are sold in the run up to Christmas. This means the game has to be finished up to five months before this — and on time. Making Christmas is the difference between profit and loss and with millions of quid at stake, things can get a bit hairy, with wrists slapped and bottoms kicked if things are late.

Even if you're not racing to catch Santa, the Development Process is complex, with teams of up to 15 people working on the same game. Each bit in the process is dependent on the other so if your bit is behind schedule, the whole project is behind making the other 14 guys a teensy bit annoyed. (No project on time, no end of project cash bonus!) If you're looking for a low stress, 9-to-5 job don't even bother thinking about going into Development.

There are two sides to Development:
- conversions, and
- original work.

Conversions are where you take an existing game on, say, Super NES and re-write it to work on another computer or console, say, the IBM PC. This is not a piece of cake. Different machines have different processors and screen resolutions so you have to re-write the code and re-draw all the graphics. Not as difficult as thinking up the million seller, but a technical challenge all the same.

With Original Development the process starts further up the line with an idea which is then kicked around and written up into a Game Design. From there it is broken down into tasks — Programming, Art, Sound and maybe even Video.

Programming requires both technical knowledge and the creative skill to be able to solve problems quickly. Game Art is a disciplined vocation as, often as not, you'll be working to tight technical guidelines. Sound and Video are specialities which are becoming more and more important as games get bigger.

Rather like in the movies, these days a producer is in charge of the project, making sure all the strands of the process come together. Months or even years later a finished game's produced — but that's not the end of the process.

Once the game is written, Playtesting is required to make sure the game plays okay and what's called Q/A (Quality Assurance) must be done to make sure there are no 'bugs' (mistakes in the code or graphic glitches).

Finally if it's a console game — the cart manufacture (usually Sega or Nintendo) has to 'approve' the game before it can be sold — using certain technical and 'artistic' criteria. Often this throws up new bugs or changes which the Developer has to accommodate.

Once it's all been approved — that's the end of the Developer's job — and we all go off down the pub for a well earned half pint of weak lager shandy.

PUBLISHING

The Publisher's role is to commission, manufacture and/or publish games. And it's not an easy business, no Sir. There are lots of different types of people needed to do

DIFFERENT STROKES

Here's a handy guide to the different kinds of jobs in the games industry — together with some rough idea of the sorts of skills you'll need.

PRODUCING

You must be: .....Technically aware and organised.
It helps if: .....Good at games and with people.
Don't if: .....You think it's glamourous.
Down side:.....You get the blame if the game is late....
Up Side: .....You sometimes get a bit of the glory!

PROGRAMMING

You must be: .....Able to write code in assembler, or more usually in a high-level language like 'C'.
It helps if: .....You've got some kind of Computer Science qualification or are self-taught and have some pretty ass-kicking demos.
Don't if: .....You can't juggle numbers.
Down side:.....Everyone thinks you're an anorak.....
Up Side: .....Write a top original game and — Bingo!

SOUND AND MUSIC

You must be: .....Into keyboards & MIDI
It helps if: .....You also program.
Don't if: .....You can't do both of the above.
Down side:.....Low, low profile — not many jobs.....
Up Side: .....You get to sell more copies than Take That!

GAME GRAPHICS

You must be: .....Able to produce great computer based art or animation — and love doing it day after day.
It helps if: .....You've been to art college and/or have a really polished/punchy portfolio.
Don't if: .....You think it's 'artistic' — main requirements are technical awareness and discipline.
Down side:.....Not much glory, rarely big bucks.....
Up Side: .....Create the New Hollywood!

GAME DESIGN

You must be: .....Obsessive and analytical about Games
It helps if: .....You've misspent your youth
Don't if: .....You can't fill an A4 sheet with ideas — NOW!
Down side:.....Not many openings in the Biz.....
Up Side: .....Your ideas get played by millions!

GAME TESTING/QA

You must be: .....Seriously into games
It helps if: .....You're a bit technical.
Don't if: .....You've never finished a game without using a cheat.
Down side:.....Bottom rung — no pay — not many jobs....
Up Side: .....It's a great entry-level to the Biz — from there the only way is up!

PUBLIC RELATIONS

You must be: .....Wildly enthusiastic yet sane
It helps if: .....You are good on the phone and can write a bit.
Don't if: .....You can't lie convincingly.
Down side:.....You get blamed for all the bad reviews.
Up Side: .....Lots of free lunches and you can easily get into other industries.

MARKETING

You must be: .....Perky & conceptually creative
It helps if: .....You can say the above while under the influence.
Don't if: .....You are confused by the Tango ad's.
Down side:.....Not as creative as you think.
Up Side: .....Better than sweeping the streets — and the skills are portable to other industries if you ever get bored.

SALES

You must be: .....Hard-nosed or pretty .
It helps if: .....You can do deals.
Don't if: .....You think it sounds easy. It's very tough
Down side:.....No sales, low pay.
Up Side: .....Big sales, big pay.

DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL

You must be: .....Cheerful, polite and hard working.
It helps if: .....You can be nice to morons.
Don't if: .....You can't be nice to morons.
Down side:.....Low pay — long hours.
Up Side: .....Great experience, helping Joe Public can be fun.

GAMES MAGAZINE JOURNALISM

You must be: .....Nuts about games and able to write to deadlines.
It helps if: .....You can also be entertaining.
Don't if: .....You think it's art.
Down side:.....Not great pay — long hours.
Up Side: .....Great experience in most aspects of The Biz. And you also get paid to play games.

everything from come up with game ideas to chasing unpaid invoices.

Some publishers have their own development teams — often referred to as 'internal' teams — which are part of the same company. However, over 50 percent of games are written by smaller independent companies, which get advances (money) to write them and royalties (a percentage of the take) if it sells enough copies.

The Publisher has some of its own Producers to keep an eye on these external developers and make sure things are ticking over okay while the game is being written.

There's also a Marketing Department members of which take ridiculously long lunches and decide how to make the game attractive to The Public — deciding on the box design, name, manual, etc — and how to make sure you get to know about it, by placing advertising and thinking up wacky promotional stunts. Sometimes there's a separate PR Department, which takes magazine journos to lunch and encourages them to say nice things about The Game.

The Sales Department dresses sharply and makes all those threatening phone calls to the shops and distributors promising them that This Game is the best thing since Sliced Bread and telling them to buy lots.

Then something called the Operations Department buys in all the components and makes sure the manuals are printed on time and okay, makes sure The Game gets duplicated and all the components get stuffed into the right boxes and shipped to Retail (the shops) when they said it would be.

Customer Support are the chaps who get to answer all the technical problems The Public has and also gives out tips and hints to the sad or hopeless gamesplayers that need them.

Finally, Administration does things like answer the phone and file paper — but are, in fact, the most important link in the whole chain, because it includes Accounts, which gets to sign the cheques.

THE REST

So that's Development and Publishing. But that's not all! Someone has to sell The Game to The Public — and usually this happens in shops. Most of the specialist shops need to employ fine young people, Sales Assistants, who know a lot about Games in order to tell the old crinkly types who come into the place, what to buy their sons and daughters.

And if all else fails, you could consider — writing about games. It will not have escaped your notice that there are a million computer game mags — all of which are written by guys (or gals) between the ages of 16 and 23. Mags are always looking for new people to write for them. But beware of sending sample reviews off on spec, however, because most of the stuff that gets sent into the mags is crap — and your masterpiece might get overlooked.

It's worth the effort, however, because getting paid to play and write about games is the nearest thing to a free lunch that exists and is an amazingly good way to get into The Biz without really trying...

No matter what you're good at, somewhere a computer games company needs your skills. But you'll have to be pretty determined and persistent to get your foot through their door.

Lots of people fancy working in the games business and the one's that get in are the people who are really clear about what precisely they want to do and the people that push hard enough for what they want.

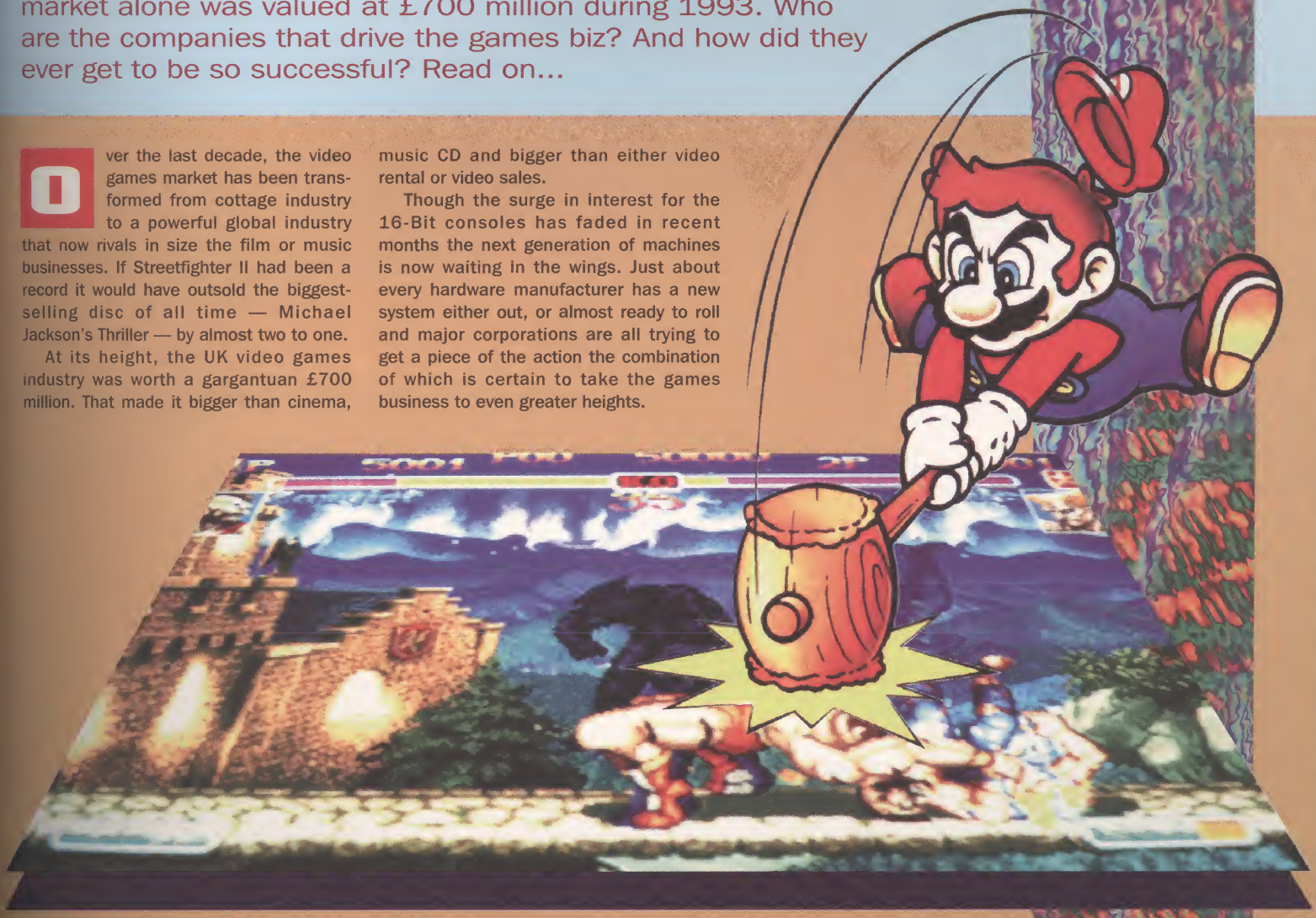
BIG PLAYERS

Playing games is a very serious matter. The UK videogames market alone was valued at £700 million during 1993. Who are the companies that drive the games biz? And how did they ever get to be so successful? Read on...

Over the last decade, the video games market has been transformed from cottage industry to a powerful global industry that now rivals in size the film or music businesses. If Streetfighter II had been a record it would have outsold the biggest-selling disc of all time — Michael Jackson's Thriller — by almost two to one.

At its height, the UK video games industry was worth a gargantuan £700 million. That made it bigger than cinema, music CD and bigger than either video rental or video sales.

Though the surge in interest for the 16-Bit consoles has faded in recent months the next generation of machines is now waiting in the wings. Just about every hardware manufacturer has a new system either out, or almost ready to roll and major corporations are all trying to get a piece of the action the combination of which is certain to take the games business to even greater heights.



SEGA

Sega began its operations in 1950. Service Games — as it then was —imported jukeboxes and pinball tables into Japan for the use of serving US armed forces. Later on, the company became known simply as Sega (SErvice GAmes, geddit?).

Just like Nintendo it released a host of successful arcade machines, starting with incredible games like Turbo and Monaco GP. Sega created a home Consumer Products division in 1983 and released a couple of pre-Master System 8-Bit consoles in Japan. Neither were successful. The Master System itself caused a stir in Japan but it was too late — Nintendo dominated the 8-Bit market in Japan and the States and nothing was going to change that.



However, for a time, Sega cleaned up Europe. Players wanted to own the games they played in the arcades and those games were exclusively owned by Sega. If you wanted Space Harrier or Outrun, the Master System was the only console that played them. Home computers still ruled the European markets, but Sega firmly established itself in Europe with the success the Master System brought them.

Sega realised it had to get its act together to compete worldwide with Nintendo. Massive investment was put into their research and development labs, resulting in the creation of the Megadrive, first released in Japan during 1989. Once again, Sega stuck to the formula of converting arcade games to the home system. The Megadrive was a lot cheaper to produce than a 16-Bit computer and the games were better. The 16-Bit console revolution was arriving.

Sega consistently gets its innovations to the shops before Nintendo. The Mega-CD remains unmatched by Nintendo (and pretty much unbought by punters) whilst the forthcoming 32X and Saturn systems will all appear a full year before their Nintendo counterparts.

SONY

Sony has been testing the water of the games industry for some time now — mainly through their software arm, producing games for the Super NES and Megadrive. However, Sony new hardware project — the PlayStation — is the most eagerly awaited of the new 32-Bit generation of machines. Before any prototype systems had been created by Sony, they had already plowed $500 million into the project. Sony last year bought UK software house Psygnosis — mainly to develop a new generation of software for the new machine. The PlayStation is expected to be launched in Japan in December 1994 but not over here until September 1995.

ATARI

Veterans of the video games business, Atari produced the very first games console, back in 1982 — the Atari VCS. The VCS was overtaken by the Commodore 64 and the Spectrum but Atari pressed on releasing more 8-Bit machines and their coin-op division was still really jumping. Then they got back into the forefront with the first 16-Bit computer — the Atari ST. This is now practically over but once again Atari is bouncing back by producing the first 64-bit games console — the Atari Jaguar. First on sale in the US at Christmas 1993, the machine is available here in Autumn 1994.

NINTENDO

Nintendo's good fortune began during the late eighties when Nintendo of Japan created the 8-Bit Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). Barely more advanced than the Commodore 64, the NES became an incredible success in Japan and the US.

Nintendo successfully replicated some of the most popular arcade games of the time on its 8-Bit system. Super Mario arrived at home and was instantly seized upon as 'the game' to have. Nintendo carried the Mario theme on, creating vast adventures for its hero.

In its best financial year Nintendo made more profit than the world's largest motor car manufacturer — Toyota. Twenty five million people owned NESs in the United States alone. And if anyone else wanted to create NES games, they had to meet Nintendo's criteria. The games had to fit in with Nintendo's vision of home gaming (no blood or 'realistic' violence). They also had to pay Nintendo a chunky royalty... and buy their cartridges from Nintendo.

The Super NES is technically superior in some respects to the Megadrive, but it was released nine months after the Sega machine. Nintendo has yet to produce a CD-based machine. And, although Nintendo's 64-Bit successor to the Super NES — the Ultra 64 — is very sophisticated, it now seems unlikely that it will go on sale in the UK until more than a year after the likes of Jaguar, 3DO and CD-i.







PHILIPS

Philips has developed a machine called the CD-i which is capable of playing music CDs, movies from CD and games from CD. The software trickery that enables video images to be stored and played on CD is now already becoming a worldwide standard called Video-CD. When Philips first launched the CD-i player it was pitched more at family entertainment and education than games. Now, however, the machine has been redesigned as a games machine which goes on sale this autumn for the first time.





3DO

3DO is a new name to the video games industry. A number of financial backers have put money into the project — the aim being to produce the best of the new crop of 32-Bbit machines. The four founders are Matsushita, Electronic Arts, AT&T (the US equivalent of British Telecom) and Time Warner. The machine first went on sale in December last year and has since sold around 200,000 units in the US. This Autumn the Panasonic REAL 3DO machine goes on sale in the UK for the first time.



THE HISTORY

The major hardware releases since C&VG was launched.

ATARI VCS (from 1979)
Massively successful console built on reputation for simple, fun games. Sixteen colours, 8K carts costing up to £30! Redesigned in 1984, and still available. Launch price: £300. Current price: £20

PHILIPS G7000 (1980)
Console for losers. Appalling graphics and deeply naff games. Died around mid '82.

ATARI 400/800 (1981)
Snoot family of computers that also took game carts. State of the art in their time — 16K and 48K RAM, but very expensive (£340, £450).

VIC 20 (1981)
Outrageously expensive (£250) 16-colour computer with 3.5K Ram. Commodore's first big hit. Got a fair selection of games.

DRAGON 32 (1982)
Best remembered for Chuckie Egg (A'n'F Software) and green screen monitors. Beaten to death by Spectrum and C64.

COMMODORE 64 (1983)
The Speccy's big rival. Had 64K RAM, an excellent SID sound chip, and medium resolution graphics. Sustained by its disk drive until late 1980s.

1979 1980 1981 1982 1983

PET (1980)
Early Commodore, preceded Vic 20. Marketed as a business machine, so enjoyed few games.

MATTEL INTELLIVISION (1980)
Sad console from toy giant that boasted a speech unit and bigger carts than VCS (16K). Some nice titles but little interest.

ZX81 (1981)
Clive Sinclair's kit machine that brought 1K computing to the masses for £50 (preceded by appalling ZX80). Black and white, horrible graphics, but a huge success.

BBC MICRO (1982)
Good to program, but had few treats for gamesplayers, apart from Elite. 'Massive' 32K RAM. Got into all the schools.

ZX SPECTRUM (1982)
Breakthrough! 16K or 48K versions (bigger became standard). Massive with buyers and programmers, despite hardware limitations and poor design. The classic 'speccy'.

COLECOVISION (1983)
Smart console with 64K carts, many of them excellent coin-op conversions. Never pushed in the country and eventually disappeared.

We're going to take you back now. Back, back, back to when the ZX81 was the bees knees and bring you gently forward to the present day to show you just how much and yet how little things have changed...

It's funny how things tend to come round again. Twelve years ago Computer and Video Games was launched to cope with the influx of new gaming machines flooding the market. Consumers were in a dilemma — What should they buy? What would be best for them? Sound familiar? Yes, we thought so too. C&VG was launched to guide the public through the same dilemma of technology which consumers face today — plenty of potential hardware products being touted, but no indication of what performs best and has the software to sustain it. Here's a rundown of how the trends went last time round...

1982-1984 RUBBER KEYBOARD WARS

Twelve years ago, readers were split between console gamers (mostly Atari VCS) and computer users. Computers were archaic beyond belief by present standards, but Joe Public bubbled with excitement over the potential use of the ZX81.

Sinclair's little ZX81 put computer's within the price range of those who couldn't afford Commodore PET's and Atari 400s, although at first published games were pretty scarce.

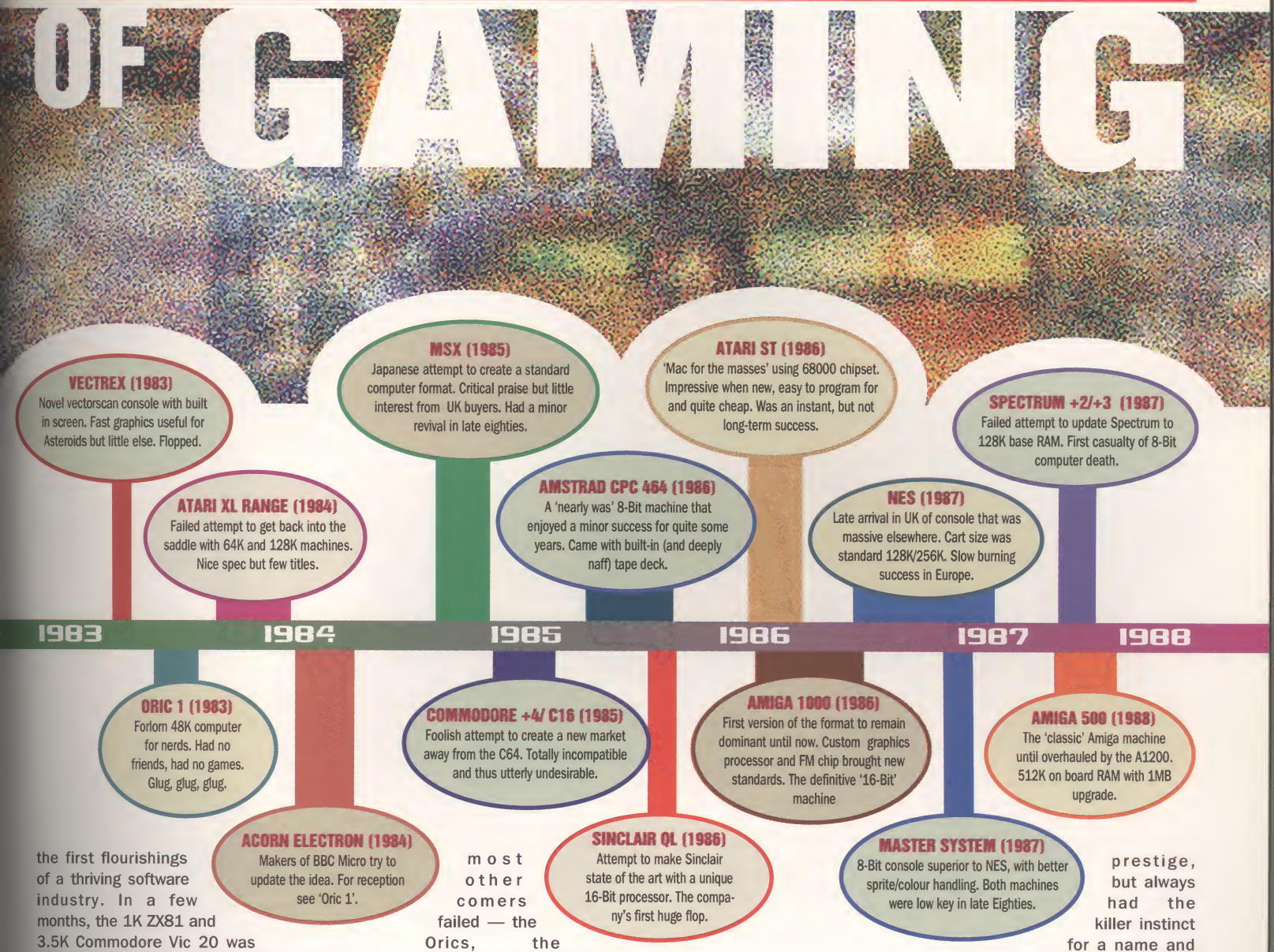
The console side was more or less sewn up by Atari, who rode on the back of conversions of sensationally playable arcade games: Asteroids, Space Invaders, Dig Dug and Pac Man. But during this period, Atari began to lose the place.

They controlled the market even more tightly than Nintendo or Sega now, with a leaner release schedule and no third party contributions. Disgruntled programmers set up rival companies: Imagic and Activision among them. In the dying year of the Atari VCS, it was their star games designers, like the veteran David Crane (Pitfall, Decathlon) that stole the headlines. Atari would eventually crash, having to bury loads of unwanted cartridges in the Nevada desert (if legend be believed) and were eventually bought for a pittance by ex-Commodore founder Jack Tramiel.

Some aspects of the games market may seem incredibly lame now. What is striking is the software scene was a limp series of rip-offs and imitations: Frogger, Donkey Kong and Pac Man appearing under more names than your average cheque book fraudster.

But as 1982 closed, new hardware brought

OF GAMING



the first flourishings of a thriving software industry. In a few months, the 1K ZX81 and 3.5K Commodore Vic 20 was eclipsed by Sinclair's new wonder machine, the ZX Spectrum and the Dragon 32 (a colour computer with a penchant for lurid shades of green) and Acorn's BBC Micro. Add the New Year's intake of the Oric 1 and Commodore 64, the 'super console' Colecovision and the quirky Vectrex machine, and you had a flurry of buying options thrust in gamesplayers' faces.

Software then, as now, was the lifeblood of a machine, and from the outset, the Spectrum caught the hearts of programmers and then buyers. Though the C64 would catch it eventually, the Spectrum was way out in front for those early years.

The trickle of Atari carts offering faceless conversions became a flood of Spectrum games, gems and dross alike, from an instant cottage industry. Names like Automata (the Pi man games) and Software Projects (Manic Miner) became touchstones for the new computer boom.

Sadly, apart from the 64 and the Spectrum, most other comers failed — the Orics, the Dragons, the Genies, the Intellivisions, the Electrons, and a good few others besides. The BBC Micro found itself a small niche — endorsed and sustained by the corporation and schools — but owners had little else but Fred Harris and Lesley Judd for company on 'Micro Live'. By 1984, companies had either C64 or Spectrum portfolios — and a license to print money.

1984 — 1985
BIG BUSINESS

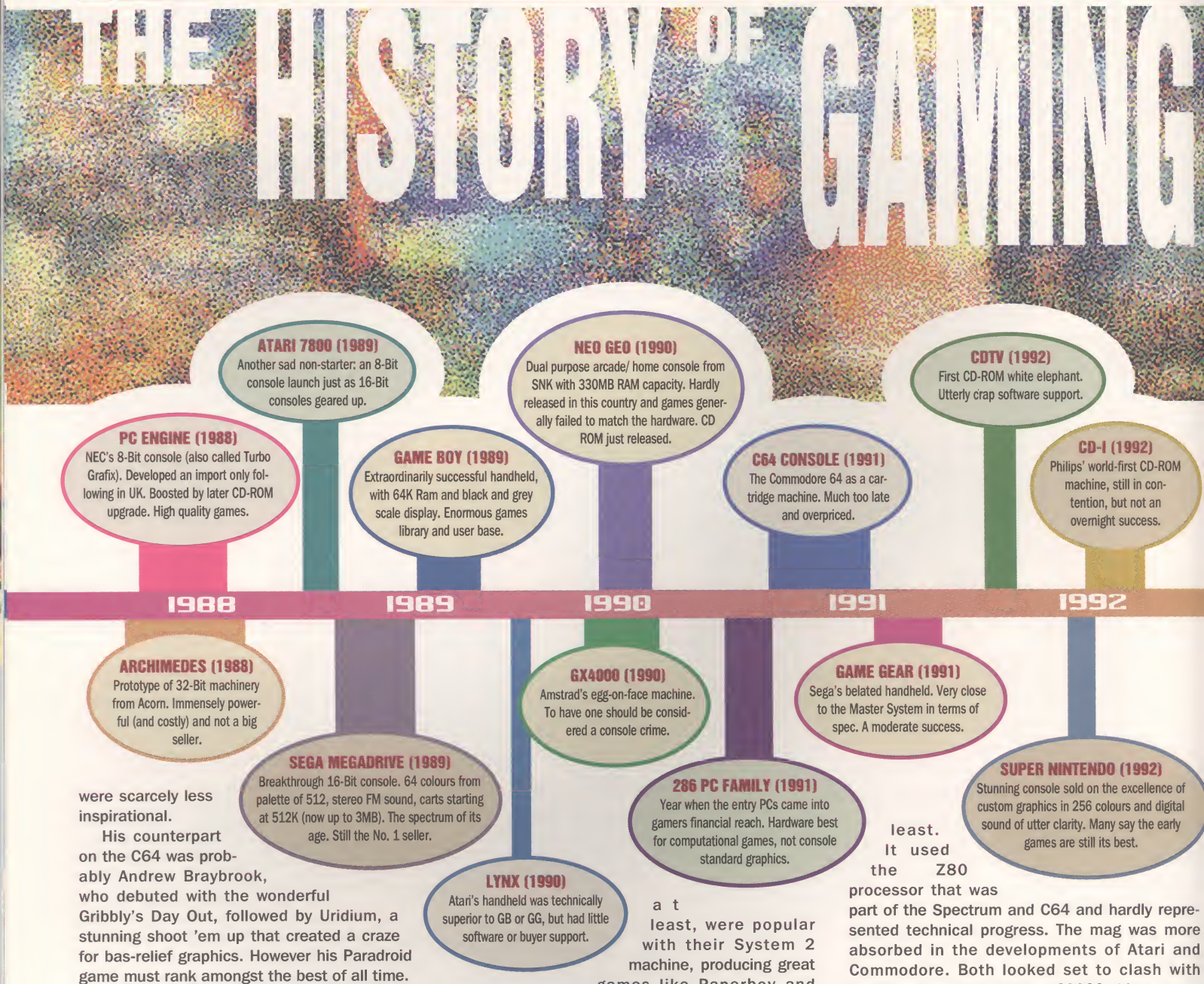
Approaching the mid-80s, the games industry changed with 'big players' emerging — companies that tapped the market intuitively and reaped the rewards. Many are still around today — Ocean and US Gold being two notable successes. They made their labels brands by carefully selecting their titles. Ocean put out a few original quirky titles to excite interest and gain prestige, but always had the killer instinct for a name and a game that people want. A lot of that fell to licensed games, based on films or popular TV shows.

US Gold started as a label for imported US software, much of it arcade conversions of Sega and Data East games. Their products always had a slickness and professionalism that Brit games, however playable and inspired, seemed to lack.

1985 — 1986
BIG IDEAS

This was the prime of the life-cycle of both Spectrum and C64. Programmers had served their apprenticeships and some real wizards emerged. One notable was Mike Singleton, creator of Spectrum The Lords of Midnight. This incredible war saga had 32,000 locations, interactive characters and an overwhelming atmosphere. His later games — Doomdark's Revenge, Quake Minus One on the C64 and Dark Sceptre,

THE HISTORY OF GAMING



were scarcely less inspirational.

His counterpart on the C64 was probably Andrew Braybrook, who debuted with the wonderful Gribbly's Day Out, followed by Uridium, a stunning shoot 'em up that created a craze for bas-relief graphics. However his Paradroid game must rank amongst the best of all time.

All good things come to an end though and by 1986, the bubble began to burst, the machines were basically unable to perform the miracles some firms desired, and projects were shelved (along with many of the companies).

1986 — 1988
16-BIT OR BUST

The mood changed from about mid 1986 onward. Gamers were less interested in epics and wanted snappier more colourful titles. The games out in front were slick conversions of coin-ops from Jap makers like Konami — titles like Mikie, Yie Ar Kung Fu, Green Beret and Comic Bakery. Konami would be a major force in gaming from that point, people's taste moving away from the Brit games. Atari, in the arcades at least, were popular with their System 2 machine, producing great games like Paperboy and Gauntlet, which converted well.

Home grown development had thrown up Sensible Software which always came up with the goods, like Parallax, Wizball and others — all of them the new style of action games. There was sussed software house Thalamus, set up by industry journos, who had the mad blaster thrashings of Swedish coder Stavros Fasoulas to flog, whose games — Xanxion, Delta, Quedex — sound a bit like Scandinavian thrash metal bands.

But news was coming from overseas. Japanese arcade manufacturers Nintendo and Sega, who had produced Super Mario Bros and Space Harrier respectively, each had a console to sell. The question was when would it make it to Britain?

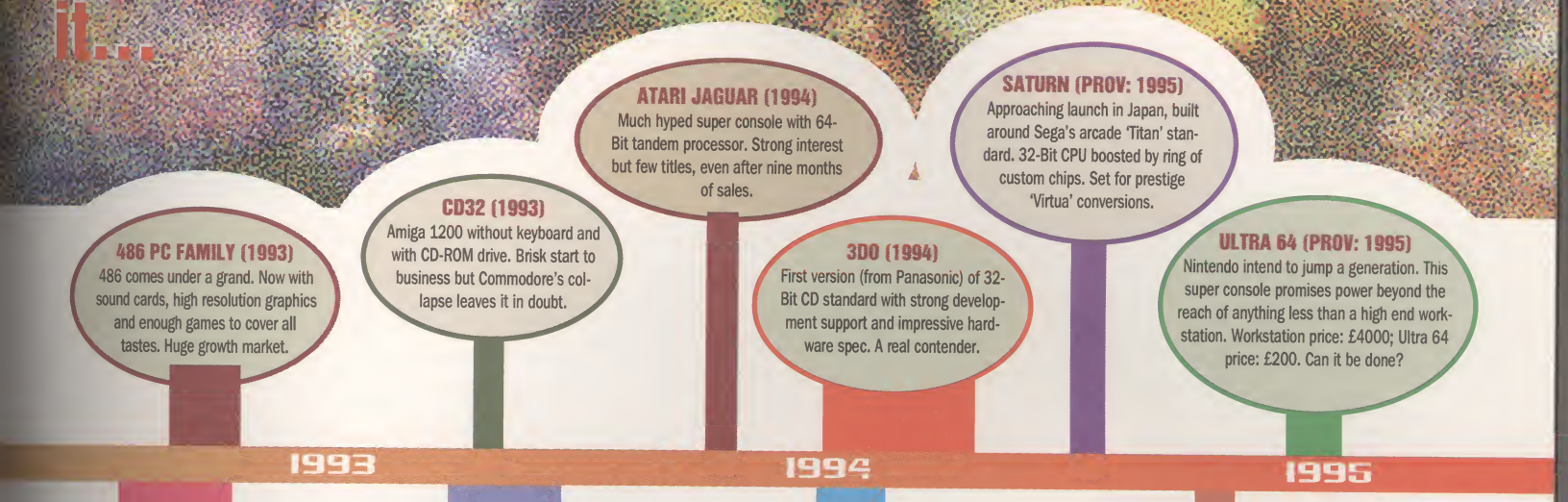
C&VG was not over enthused with the NES at least. It used the Z80 processor that was part of the Spectrum and C64 and hardly represented technical progress. The mag was more absorbed in the developments of Atari and Commodore. Both looked set to clash with machines based on the new 68000 chip set.

Commodore's Amiga and Atari's ST became the subject of intense debate within the magazine. Which was better, which would win? At first the ST seemed ahead judging by the games released, but the hardware was inferior to the Amiga's custom chip set, and easy expansion gave the Commodore machine the legs to march it into the 90s, and indeed the present day.

1989 — 1990
THE LEAN YEARS

This period was not the most dynamic in the decade of games growth. The ST and Amiga were firmly established, but few titles made an impact on game history. Those that do stand out are monumental. Denton Design's Eco engi-

The last 12 years have seen an influx of new machines. Most are now in attics. Will today's new machines meet the same fate? We doubt it...



neered the creation of life from a simulation standpoint, and inspired future sim games. Populous also made the mark of a young team, Bullfrog, who have found it to be an excellent basis for a series of thought-provoking God games. They also get the satisfaction of creating a genre unto themselves.

But the enduring creation of the time is Tetris. Imported by Mirrorsoft from Russian nonentities, it has exploded to become the unparalleled game phenomenon in a thousand guises.

Dungeon Master, Carrier Command and Virus were all prestige games only possible on 16-Bit, but in the arcade Sega produced titles like Outrun and Thunderblade using technology to thrill, not engross. What was really needed was a new machine, and a big campaign. The turn of the decade saw both.

1991 — 1994 SONIC DAYS

By 1991 it was clear the second coming of the consoles was coming. The 8-Bits had only been minor successes, the Z80 computers were just about dead, and the 16-Bits were rumbling along nicely. That year saw a brief skirmish in the Battle of the Handhelds, as Nintendo's Game Boy took on the Game Gear and the Atari Lynx. The Game Boy now rules, although the Game Gear didn't get the trounced like the Lynx.

But big plans were being laid for the Megadrive. C&VG began to reflect the fast-living mentality shown in the groovy Sega ads featuring 'Jimmy', by moving a bit closer to the edge. The dubious Sadie took over high scores and Mean Yob, the letters columnist, became the most abusive letter columnist in the western world. C&VG was well placed for the Sonic generation.

But the mag's attention was already drifting elsewhere, to Japan where Nintendo had finally launched their Super Famicom machine.

Most of the early games on the system: Konami's Castlevania; Enix's Actraiser; Tonkin House's Super Tennis, Pilotwings and the incredible conversion of Streetfighter II blew C&VG reviewers and eventually the games-playing public) away. This was a standard of gaming totally unrivalled by anything on the Amiga, or even the slow and expensive home PCs of the time (a 286 was around £900).

During this time, the growth of the PC into a fully-fledged games machine began, ably assisted by companies like Lucas Arts, who had ten years of know-how to create masterpieces like X-Wing, and their distinctive Monkey Island adventures. Sega tried to piggy back the Mega-CD on the success of the Megadrive, but it never really caught on.

And then in 1993, a slew of exciting bulletins announced a clutch of next generation machines, that would utilise chip sets distinctly different from the 68000 that power the Amiga family and Megadrive.

The future would be 32-Bit and 64-Bit, 16.7 million colours and layered on 650MB CD-ROM. Everyone's machine was going to be the machine. As the first machine, the Atari Jaguar broke, it seemed time for C&VG to redesign itself once more.



BEST





Games eh? So many out there to choose from and so few really good ones — it's enough to boggle the most discerning person's brain. Well, as usual, the Computer and Video Games team is here to help in any way it can. To take the agony out of those oh so difficult game selection decisions, we've compiled this mammoth 58-Page guide to help you find the best games to suit









CD-i

PHILIPS

£34.99

If Kether goes to prove one thing, it's that you don't need an FMV cartridge to play really decent CD-i software.

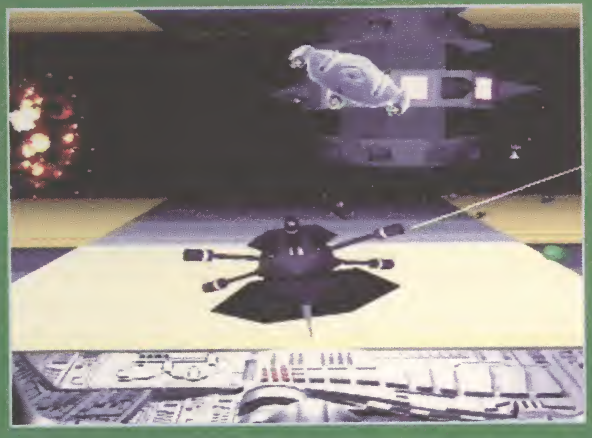


▲ Oh heavy ma---n! That tin can with teeth is going to eat me!

KETHER

The CD-i's been criticised in the past for its lack of action games, a situation which has been rapidly rectified with games such as Kether. It's made up from three basic styles – shoot 'em up, exploration and puzzle, which, individually at least, aren't that impressive, but together create an original product that's very good value for money. Most of the action is soaked up by the blasting stages which are similar in many respects to games such as Silpheed and Microcosm. The backdrops look great, but that's about all they do. So it's handy, really, that there are a hell of a lot of alien ships to shoot at, that are doing their utmost to stop you looking at the background and get you to press the restart button. Spliced between these are 3D maze levels and a series of mildly taxing puzzles, which get the brain working, but not so much that action game freaks that are logic game chimps get too frustrated.

The presentation is of a very high standard, especially as the game doesn't need a digital video cartridge to run. Although whoever wrote the script for the voice overs should be lined up against the same wall as the actors and shot.



▲ It's action stations ahoy with alien ships aplenty to blast to bits.













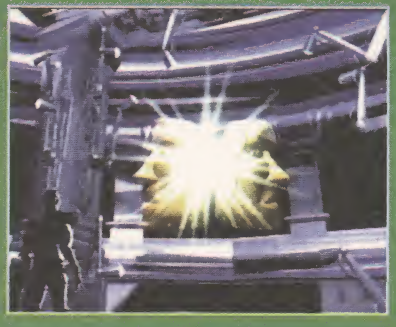




you and your system. Having sifted through hundreds of games released over the past few months, we've come up with a handy pick of the crop list for each system. Dozens of comprehensive reviews, all with overall scorings, are featured, packed with all the information you could need to help you in your quest for the perfect game.

GAMES GUIDE





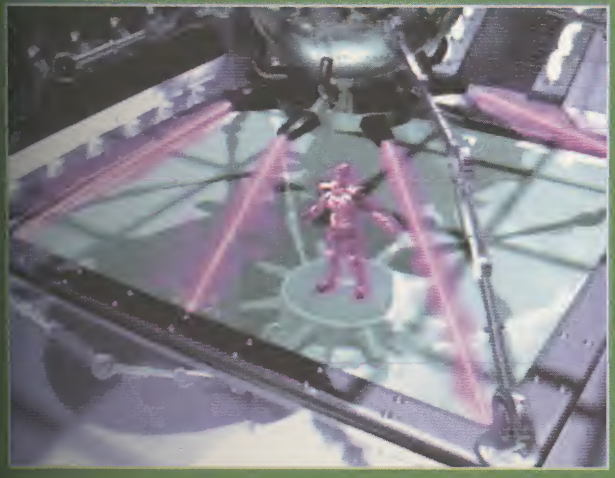
And for those of you watching this in black and white, the green ball is the one next to the mamoth explosion in the corner.

CVG VERDICT

The CD-i's got no worries when it comes to running all manner of multimedia gubbins, but until the arrival of Kether it was an action game wasteland. While there's nothing at all groundbreaking about this game, and the voice overs are the worst ever (and that includes TV, radio, talking books etc), it's extremely playable and you don't need to shell out £150 for an FMV cartridge to run it. Combine that with the three different game styles and you've got a recipe for a disc which should keep you playing for a very long time indeed.

OVERALL

75







■ 3DO

■ ELECTRONIC ARTS

■ £54.99

Electronic Arts has struck gold with Road Rash – undeniably one of the best things ever to happen to 32-Bit gaming.





▲ If other riders start gaining — knock 'em into a tree

If you've seen Road Rash before on any other system, forget it. This is light years ahead. The only thing it has in common with its forebears is motorbikes and the fact that it's a computer game.

The aim is to become a biking god by literally blowing away the competition in a series of cross-country and cross-town races. Unfortunately you start the game as more of a bike-clod, with a slow set of wheels, very little money and no respect from your fellow riders. But, as they say, respect has to be earned, so it's important to win the early races and get enough money in the bank to buy a bigger, faster bike and develop an attitude problem that will put the fear of God into other riders.

When you're ready to hit the streets for the first time it's hard not be overwhelmed by the graphics – they're better than you'll find in most coin-ops. The texture mapped scenery looks genuinely 3D, although you're often going too fast to appreciate just how good they really are. When you've got your breath back and actually get down to the serious riding business it soon becomes very clear that there's a lot more to this game than nice graphics...







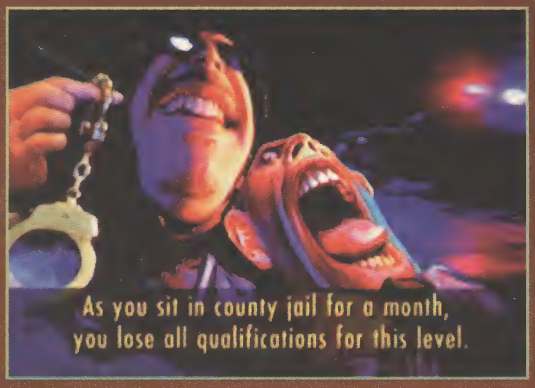
▲ One hazard out there, particularly in rural areas, is mud on the road.

As well as other riders, the roads tend to be fairly busy with cars, pedestrians and, by far the worst, police. There's nothing you can do about anything on four wheels except pray you get out of the way in time. The police bikes, as with the other racers, can be dealt with by unleashing a volley of kicks and punches, although they do tend to retaliate by beating you unconscious with a large stick. Pedestrians are the most fun, though — they're no match for a Japanese superbike bearing down on them at 200Mph. On top of all that there's the scenery to avoid. You can take your bike for a spot of off-road driving, which is unintentional at times as you often find yourself on the wrong side of motorway barriers.

It doesn't stop there. The music for the game is supplied by top rock acts such as Soundgarden and Paw, the CD's loaded with FMV footage and it's presented brilliantly with plenty of sequences linking everything together. There's no shortage of levels either, with five main courses each of which have five progressively tougher, and longer, levels. But there's no coming second. The only way to survive later in the game is by splashing your cash on a new hog, but you won't be able if you don't make it to the end to claim your prize money.



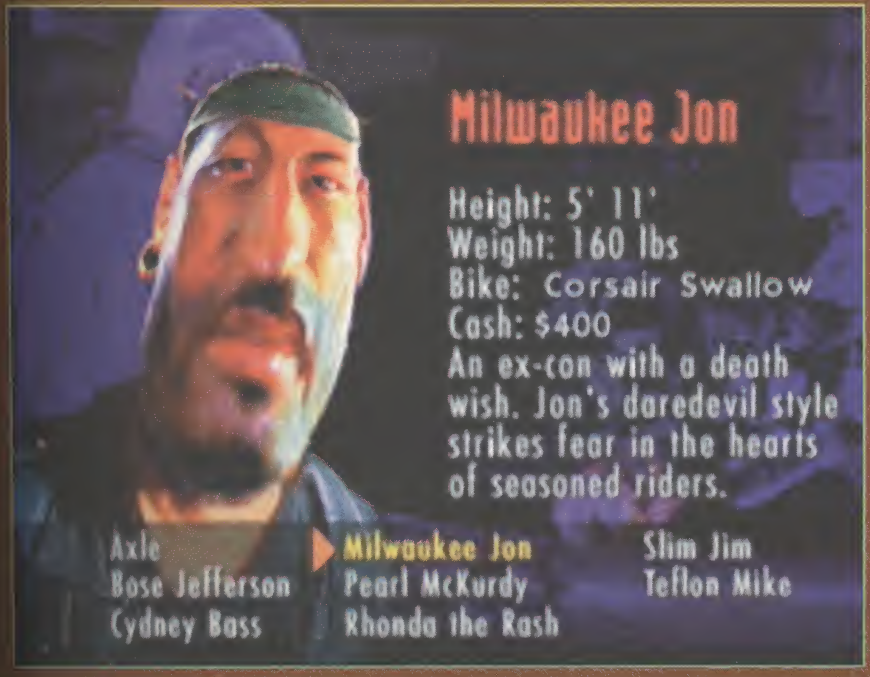
ROAD RASH





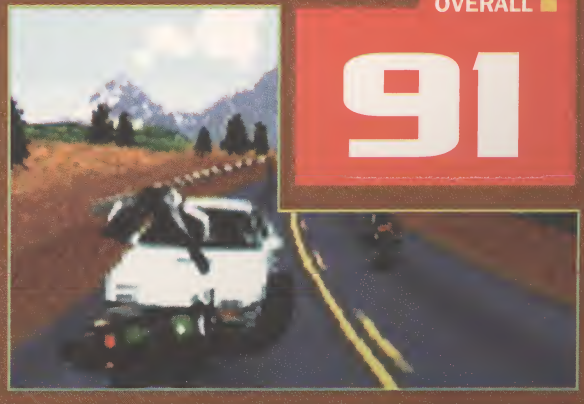
▲ Tire crashes in Road Rash 3DO are stomach-churningly realistic as this head on collision with an oncoming car shows.





CVG VERDICT

It took a while, but finally we have a game which demonstrates what all the fuss about 32-Bit technology is all about. Road Rash is simply amazing, from the stunning presentation to the excellent playability. In fact, the game itself tends to be a little overshadowed by all the tertiary features – which also include a second CD with the game's soundtrack on. The early levels are pitched very much towards learner drivers, being a tad short and devoid of traffic, but later on your reflexes are pushed to the limit, and you'll be thankful that you can save out your games just in case you end up under the front wheels of a lorry. If you're still looking for an excuse to part with your money for a 3DO, there isn't a better one than this.



OVERALL

91

TWISTED

■ 3DO

■ ELECTRONIC ARTS

■ £54.99

What's in a name, eh? Quite a lot if this is anything to go on.

Explaining the nature of this game would be quite simple if it wasn't for the fact that to merely label it as a puzzle game would be doing it a severe injustice. It's set out like a gameshow, complete with smarmy host, games, sub-games, pitfalls, and contests who look like extras from Hellraiser.

It's not so much the gameplay which makes Twisted so special, as the fantastic presentation. The use of FMV is some of the most imaginative we've seen in any game. For once we've got a computer game which sets out to be funny and actually succeeds, with a huge amount of sit-back-and-watch entertainment. Twisted really is in a league of its own – you won't find a game like it on any other system. All it lacks is a one-player mode, but if you've got enough people handy, up to four can take part.









■ CVG VERDICT

The only thing wrong with Twisted is the lack of a one-player mode. As fun as it is to sit back and watch the myriad collection of video clips, it's not quite the same without having any pitfalls thrust upon you. However, if fumbling around with Trivial Pursuit wedges is beyond you after a 'dinner' party, this is the perfect alternative, and you'll impress a few people with it as well. The problem is getting them to leave once they've started playing.

OVERALL

88

JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL

■ 3DO

■ ELECTRONIC ARTS

■ £54.99

Hut! Hut! Hut! Get out those enlarged shoulders and prepare for some football action, 3DO style...

There's no arguing with the playability of the Madden's series on Megadrive, which explains why Electronic Arts has basically stuck to the same format for the 3DO version. The graphics in this version, however, are all digitised — from the commentator to the pllayers — which makes a massive difference to the gameplay. The whole thing is extremely playable, but you need to know a little about the sport to enjoy it. And, like many sports sims, it's best played with a mate.

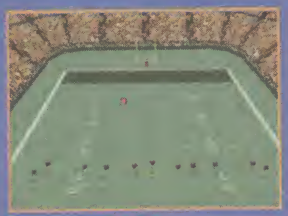
Because it's an American simulation of a very American sport, it's packed with pointless statistics which only come in handy for settling an argument where the loser claims they were robbed. However, not even the Yanks can make sense of all the diagrams which make up the play book, so it's best to opt for the ones that look the busiest and rely on skill and fluke to see you through.

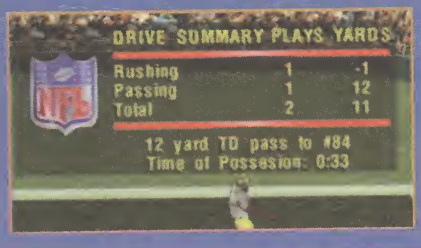
■ CVG VERDICT

Like almost every sports game under the sun regardless of the system it's on, Madden's is at its best in two-player mode. The graphics, despite being well digitised aren't as clear as they could have been, especially when the players are turning around. Despite its faults, Madden's is still extremely playable, loaded with features and is very easy to get into – providing you have at least a modicum of understanding when it comes to American football.

OVERALL

82







▼ The players gather for one of many complicated formations.

ANOTHER WORLD



■ 3DO

■ INTERPLAY

■ £49.99

Deeper than a puddle in Gloucester on the day Dr Foster decided to visit, it's one of the classic platform adventures of all time.

Another World was one of those games which surfaced with very little fanfare, thus taking an unsuspecting public utterly by surprise. It was probably because it assumed that, basically, people would like a change from Mario and, maybe, would like to apply their minds to a game as well as their joypad thumbs.

That's exactly what they got. A well-structured, decently plotted game which was set apart from the normal breed of mindless platformers thanks to a clever balance of puzzle-solving and action which, despite throwing up the occasional poser, was never frustrating. However, it isn't a game you jump straight into. It starts with your character being blasted through a dimensional warp and onto an alien planet, where he's immediately set upon by poisonous worms and giant monster which has the speed of a lion, the strength of a bear and the attitude of Margaret Thatcher when someone tells her 'no'.

Converted from the PC version, 3DO Another World benefits from all-new digitised backdrops in this version, with the basic format unchanged from the original.

The absorbing gameplay draws you in and keeps you hooked right through to the end thanks to a well thought out plot and plenty of variety in the action.

Not quite the best 3DO title money can buy, but very close to it indeed.

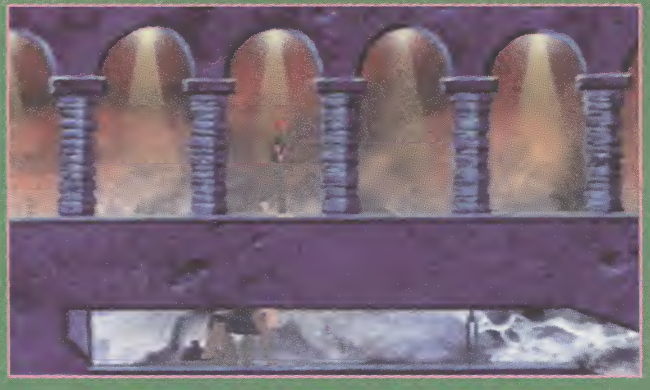


■ CVG VERDICT

Another World loses nothing in translation, although you can't help but feel that Interplay could have at least attempted to add a new ending or perhaps expanded on the game for this version. If you've got this game on another machine it's really not worth buying again as all you're getting are a few new backdrops. On the flip-side, if you've never played Another World you're missing out on a genuine classic which deserves a place in any 3DO owner's collection

OVERALL ■

90



▲ Buddy ventures cautiously under the arches — gun at the ready.

▼ Our hero blasts an alien beastie with his high-powered zap gun — that will teach you, you fiend from hell!



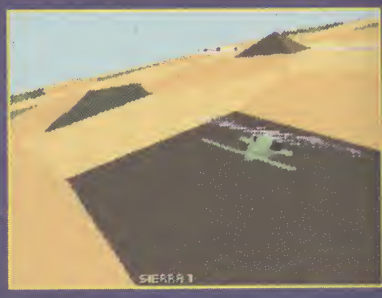




■ CD32
■ SIMULATION
■ £29.99

GUNSHIP 2000

You can keep your fast planes. You can stick your speedboats and speedier cars, and bikes can be left with the kids. If you want something really hard then there's nothing better than a nice big chopper.



▲ Microprose has forsaken the traditional looking polygons of F-15 for a more realistic flowing landscape.









Gunship was probably the game that made Microprose. Gunship 2000 is the game that will make the CD32. Being an extremely versatile attack craft, the AH64 Apache is the perfect craft for a combat simulation, being able to take on many roles and lend itself to a variety of different missions over a large selection of terrains.

Gunship 2000 gives you the chance to pit your wits against all sorts of enemy, from the classically stupid Iranians to the deadly Europeans, doing everything from photographing bases, providing backup for ground troops or just plain destroying everything in sight. If you like, there are even a couple of camels for you to take a few pot shots at, not that we would recommend it!

One of the nicest things about the game is the graphic system used. Although Microprose already has a fine and functioning 3D graphic engine, as used in F-15 Strike Eagle II and F-19, they threw away the traditional looking polygons for a more realistic flowing landscape, with a far better use of colour than the previous titles. It all makes for a very thrilling looking game.

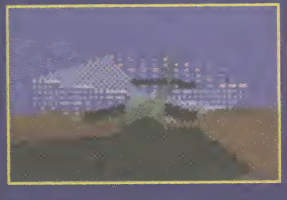
As always, your persona in the game has a career, and the more missions you succeed in, the more chance of promotion you have and the more likely you are to be able to pilot even bigger and better choppers against more deadly enemy. This is a game that grows with you!





■ CVG VERDICT

Gunship was one of the biggest selling games of all time, and this sequel should do even better. Without a doubt the most realistic looking flight simulator to grace the Amiga or CD32, it's also one of the most playable. Microprose has been very clever in converting the controls of a game that uses most of a keyboard to a seven button controller, by way of a menu screen for all non-essential options and combinations of buttons for the more essential ones. The superb rendered intro, alongside the new improved music and in-flight speech make this one atmospheric bird. You'd be a fool to miss it.



OVERALL ■

91



FRONTIER ELITE 2

CD32

SIMULATION

£29.99

Space trading, military promotion and every star in the known galaxy, all in a single 600K game?



David Braben became immensely rich and successful off the back of a game he wrote ten years ago called Elite.

Frontier Ellite 2 is the long awaited sequel to that original space trading game, and gives the player the chance to fly anywhere in the known galaxy, quite a few places in the unknown galaxy and trade/ fight/ fly alongside a more varied cast and ship fleet than every episode of Star Trek The Next Generation strung together.

Collecting cash through many a trading and taxing deal, the player can join the military, and although you may start near the bottom as a bit of a nobody, you get your mean machine straight away and can quickly rise through the ranks, collect combat points and hopefully attain the mystical rank of Elite at the end of it all!

It's not going to be an easy ride though so brace yourselves and let's get ready to fly...

CVG VERDICT

Described as a 'roller coaster ride of thrills', Frontier takes everything that was good from the original Elite, and adds so much to it that you wonder if that little grey box from Commodore could ever cope! But cope it does, and admirably. Rarely will you find a game as captivating as this one and if you want your games deep, then you won't go far wrong with this.

OVERALL



FURY OF THE FURRIES

CD32

PLATFORM PUZZLER

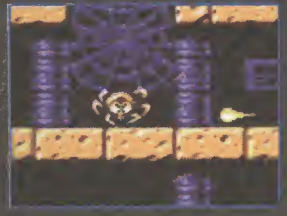
£29.99

Mindscape's Sqweeks have been to space, and discovered the joys of 'change'...



If you take a small bundle of furry creatures, and then give them the ability to morph themselves into different furry bundles, you've got the basis of quite a nice puzzle game.

Fury Of The Furries mixes elements of everything from Lemmings (small graphics) and Silly Putty/Morph (changing your shape to suit your environment) to create one of the most charismatic and entertaining platform titles yet.





At the start of each level your aim is the same — get to the other end of the level where the exit is marked.

To get there you have to use a combination of a furry who can bite through rocks, one who can swim, one who can swing on a rope and one who can shoot fireballs, and it's no mean feat if you manage it, we can tell you..

CVG VERDICT

Rather than just port the game over from the Amiga, Mindscape has actually taken the time to tweak Fury so that it runs as well as it can on the CD32. Sure, there's the CD music thrown in, but a selection of new screens to brighten everything up, plus a decent control method making full use of the separate buttons on the joypad make the game that bit more enjoyable.

OVERALL

85





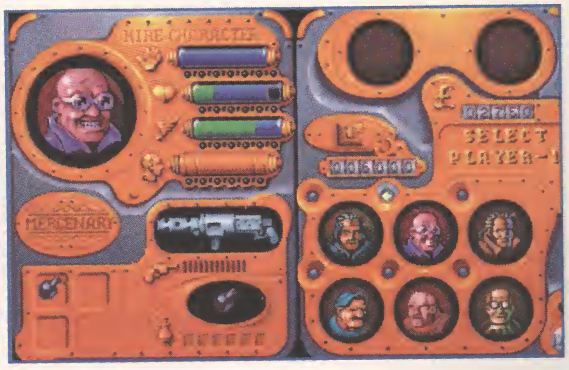
THE CHAOS ENGINE

■ CD32

■ SHOOT 'EM UP

■ £29.99

If violence is your thing, then the Bitmap Brothers just might have your cup of tea.



Games like Commando and Ikari Warriors really gripped the imagination in the good old days, and it's been quite a while since anyone came out with a game where you played a lone soldier against the world, armed with only a machine gun and a bit of grit and determination. You, and a friend, can race around a pseudo 3D landscape, collecting cash, destroying stuff, and generally having a great time . When the Bitmaps unveiled their plans for this particular piece of action, the world sat up. When they released it, the world stayed up all night playing it.



■ CVG VERDICT

When it comes to games with more polish than Mr Sheen, The Chaos Engine is one that takes some beating. Immensely playable from the outset, this pretends to be nothing more than it actually is — a solid action game where you press the fire button to start, and don't take your finger off it until you suffer a power cut. To really enjoy the game, play it with a friend, but get ready for some arguments.

OVERALL

88







BUBBA 'N' STIX

■ CD32

■ PLATFORM PUZZLER

■ £25.99

Core Design has always been a champion of the Amiga platform market, and this shows why.

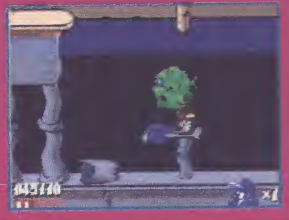






Take your bog standard platform game, and then spice up the graphics to something that resembles more of a cartoon than a computer game. Then throw in a plot about a truck driver kidnapped by aliens to be added to a space zoo, and then by some misfortune gets dropped on an alien planet with only a small, but highly intelligent stick for company, and you've got one of Core Design's best ever games.

In a lot of ways it's an intellectual platformer. Although in practice a lot of the game involves leaping from ledge to ledge, avoiding some bad guys and taking out others, the purpose of all this travelling around is to actually solve some problem or other, such as how to escape from the prison cell on level 2.





■ CVG VERDICT

Much the same as the original Amiga version really, which is good as the Amiga version was fantastic. The addition of a fully animated intro, along with new improved sound effects and speech really make something more of the game, plus that fabulous CD soundtrack. A great platform game, with the puzzle elements giving it the room to stand head and shoulders above most.

OVERALL

88



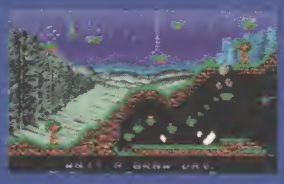
FIRE & ICE

CD32

PLATFORM

£24.99

Graftgold are out to prove that there doesn't have to be anything lukewarm about CD32 platformers.





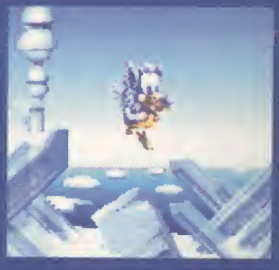




Any game released by Andrew Braybrook and/or the Graftgold team is something to sit up and take notice of. Having released some of the classic games of our time in the form of Paradroid and Uridium, it's interesting to see how they have taken their philosophy of blazing colour, arcade speed and immense playability to the CD32.

The result is a platform title where you control Cool Coyote over all the usual levels, against all sorts of bad guys, but at speeds that Sonic would be pushed to match. The reason behind the name? The levels start in the frozen wastes, and progressively get warmer as you work your way through.





CVG VERDICT

An extremely polished platform game, Fire and Ice exudes character, class and finesse. The CD32 version is easily one of the best conversions of the game, with beautiful graphics, stunning backgrounds and fantastic music, reckoned to be some of the best ever heard in a game, even better than that of Ecco The Dolphin! If you're a CD32 owner, you'd be mad to miss this one.

OVERALL

90

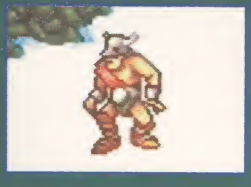
HEIMDALL 2

CD32

ARCADE ADVENTURE

£34.99

The 8th Day returns to the land of spiky helmets, courtesy of Core Design.



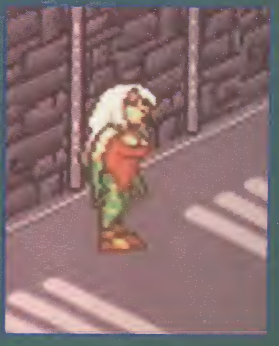






Sticking with the Norsey theme for another game, Heimdall has returned from the halls of the gods to once again take on the might of the evil Loki, who has been left to roam free, leaving chaos and destruction throughout the world. Heimdall, who has now been joined by a female companion, must walk through the isometric world, solving puzzles, collecting items, fighting off bad guys, performing all tasks asked of him and generally unfolding the plot as he goes. Although the story is a huge one, when you start you know little of it, and a little at a time is made known to you, so you are never given the chance to be overwhelmed by the immensity of the game.

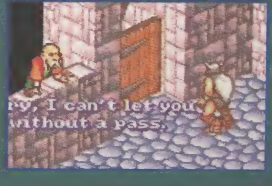






CVG VERDICT

In Heimdall, 8th Day had almost got it right. With the sequel, they've hit the nail on the head and come up with a game that is just as much fun for a non-adventure game player as the kind of person who wants to sit down for hours. The O'Carroll graphics are just as stunning as ever, and the inclusion of a film score soundtrack just adds bags of atmosphere to an already brilliant title.



OVERALL

86

ALIEN VS

■ JAGUAR ATARI
■ SHOOT EM' UP
■ PRICE £59.99

Read the title, realise the game's potential then read the review to find out whether this is action game heaven, or if Atari need kicking out of the airlock for the biggest hash-up in history.





Fair enough, we admit it, Atari, along with programming team Rebellion, have done the biz with this number. While the game format is a little Doom-ish, the addition of the two greatest movie aliens of all time, head-to-head, with humans trapped in between them, is a formula for one of the best blasts you'll find on any console.

The first thing you notice when you play this game is the graphics. With the Jag comfortably pumping out 32,000 colours on-screen at a time to provide the texture mapped scenery, it looks fantastic. And that's before you encounter any enemies. The sound consists mainly of background noise and effects sampled straight from the films. So often the first sign that a Predator's in the same room as you is the clicking noise from its jaw followed by some speech, which is usually a challenge. The best effect, though, has to be when you switch between the Predator's vision filters, the visual and audio effects are just amazing.

Atari has taken full advantage of the licence, allowing you to play either as the Predator, Alien or human. Each has its own specific mission objectives. As the Predator it's to kill the queen alien, which means you're up against her alien armies as well as the marines, but you've got all the gadgets from the movies at your disposal – including the rather excellent invisibility screen. If you're the alien, on the other hand, it's up to you to protect your boss, cocoon humans for extra lives and slaughter everything else you come across. Lastly there's the marine corps, who basically are just out to sur-







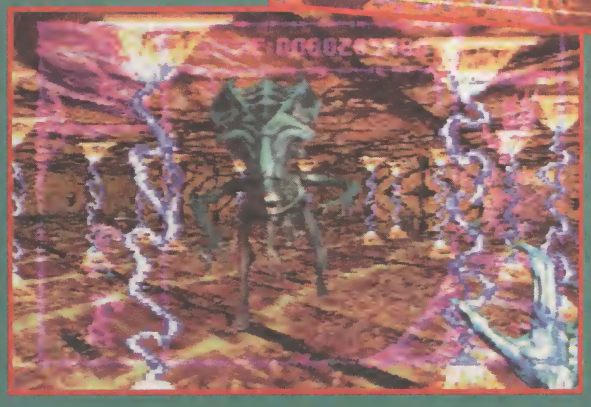
▲ Get that alien in your sights and blast it to high heaven with one of your high-powered weapons.



PREDATOR

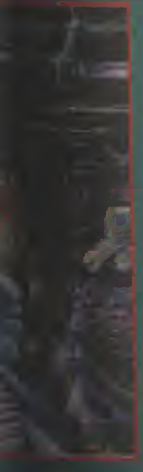
















vive, and it isn't easy. All this contributes to the make-or-break feature of the game – atmosphere. Because Rebellion has forsaken backing music in favour of sound effects there's always a feeling of impending dread, which isn't helped by the fact that the aliens can pop up at any time and the Predator could be standing right behind you... The game's set across three main areas – the marine base, the Predator ship and the alien base, which features excellent Gieger-style backdrops. The only disappointing thing about the game is that some of the creature graphics look a bit ropey, but when you take everything into account, especially the fact that this running on a machine which only costs £229, it's very impressive indeed.

CVG VERDICT

Thankfully Atari's blushes have been spared. The potentially angry lynch mob are putting away their nooses for another occasion. Alien vs Predator is everything we expect it to be.The characters are put to good use, especially the humans who spend most of their time wandering around scared and being picked off by marauding aliens. This helps give the game the kind of atmosphere which is lacking in a lot of titles these days. For Jaguar owners, this is the best game you can buy for your system, for everyone else – isn't it time you upgraded?

OVERALL

90

TEMPEST 2000

■ JAGUAR ATARI
■ SHOOT 'EM UP
■ PRICE £54.99

This is more than just a game, it's a complete head-rush, and one of the best reasons to become a Jaguar owner.

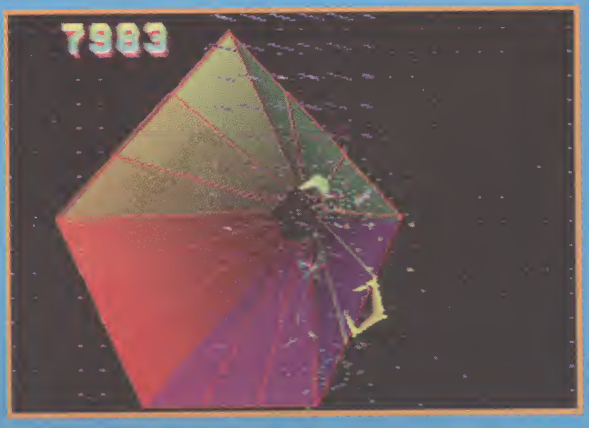




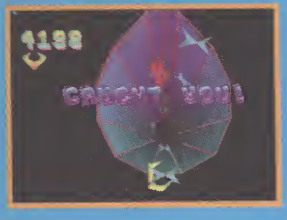


▲ If you're really clever, you can access a smart bonus level like this one. Wow!











Programmed by veteran codester Jeff Minter (a llama-owning hippy responsible for some of the most whacked-out games ever), Tempest 2000 bears all the hallmarks of his 'special' kind of programming talent to create a shoot 'em up the likes of which you've never seen before. If you've never played Tempest you've missed out on a genuine coin-op classic. Like most good ideas, the concept is very simple. You guide your ship around the rim of a 3D well, blasting any aliens attempting to find their way out. This created something which was so totally addictive that before long almost every arcade in the country had a machine. Tempest 2000 follows that pattern of playability, while at the same time blasting your senses with the wildest display of colour and sound ever seen in a game. A thumping rave soundtrack accompanies the hypnotic visuals which threaten at times to overwhelm the game itself. There is the occasional lull when the bonus stages crop up. These ambient breaks in the action are a lot slower and you'll want to get right through to the end of them just so you can get your breath back before the game starts in full. If you've really had enough, though, Atari has been thoughtful enough to include a version of the original Tempest on the cart, which is a stroll in the park compared to its '90s upstart brother.

■ CVG VERDICT

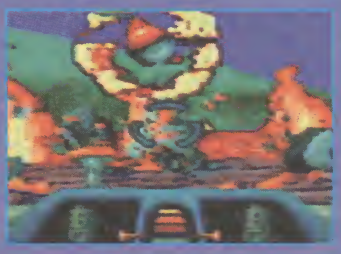
Sit down for a couple of hours in front of big-screen TV playing this and you'll come away truly exhausted. It's a feeling brought on by the superfast gameplay which throws blinding stroboscopic visuals at you from every corner of the display while battering your ears with some of the best computer game music you've ever heard (so good, in fact, it's been released as a CD). It's a very sad, cliched thing to say, but Tempest 2000 isn't a game – it's an experience.



OVERALL

88

BATTLECORPS



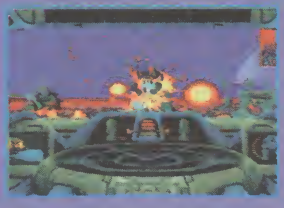
MEGA CD

SHOOT'EM UP

£39.95

Core go into battle wearing their best suits.









Having wowed us with Thunderhawk a year or so back, Core have revived their amazing 3D engine for Battlecorps. A series of ore-rich planets are being plundered by a band of alien pirates and the Earth authorities have decided enough is enough — it's time to send the Battlecorps into action. A group of soldiers resplendent in large robotic fighting suits — the Battlecorps — are dropped on to the troubled planets and simply left to smooth over any troubles using extreme violence. As such, the planets are simply stepping stones to some serious rumbles. Viewed through the visor of your character's suit, Battlecorps' 3D world scrolls past, bringing with it all manner of strange robots.

In addition to taking these out, the player must blow up their drilling rigs before taking on a larger boss. Starting on a volcanic world, the action moves underwater, into a snowy wasteland, and into a subterranean cavern where the alien leaders are waiting. Uh-oh!

CVG VERDICT

Thunderhawk is a Mega-CD classic but limited at times. Battlecorps, though, mixes the clever 3D routines of 'Hawk with deeper, more involved gameplay resulting in a superb blaster! Control over the robot suit is easy and the weapon systems impressive. Battlecorps is a stunning game that gets better every time you play it. It is overflowing with neat touches and ideas, and looks good enough to eat. Brilliant.

OVERALL

92

SENSIBLE SOCCER



MEGA CD

SPORTS

£44.95

The greatest Amiga game of all time comes to the Mega-CD. And about time too.





With its tiny sprites, unrealistic aftertouches and extremely long passes, Sensible Soccer has long since entered the Amiga hall of fame. As can be expected, countless conversions to every format known to man have ensued, and now Sensi is CD-bound. Mega-CD Sensi is identical in appearance to the Megadrive game, with the 22 tiny sprites legging it about an eight-way-scrolling pitch. All the international and club sides are present (albeit with different player names to avoid copyright laws — Peul Once, anyone?), and matches can be played from anything between three minutes to ten per half. However, the main enhancement of this CD version is in the sound department. The programmers at Sensi have taken their trusty tape deck to a Tranmere Rovers game, so the sound is full of 'oohs' for near misses, cheers for goals, and boos for fouls.

CVG VERDICT

Sensi Soccer may not be the most realistic footy game out, but its playability rules supreme. The only avenue left for the CD version was to improve the sound. Sensi CD is full of roars, claps and chants — but, rather oddly, they take a few seconds to load from the CD, leaving a bizarre gap between goal and cheer! Mega-CD owners have had a really lean time of it of late, but this is more than compensation.

OVERALL

84

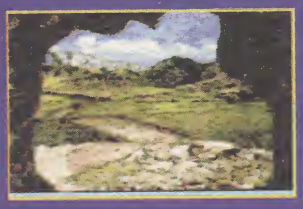
JURASSIC PARK



MEGA CD

ARCADE ADVENTURE

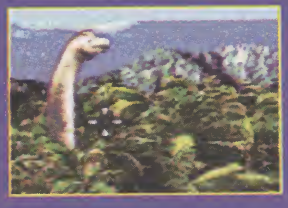
£44.95





Steven Spielberg's incredible film comes to the format which should do it the most justice.

The island of Isla Nuba contains a very special secret. Deep within its lush rainforest the greatest reptiles ever to roam the Earth are back. Cloned from dinosaur DNA, one Doctor John Hammond has managed to recreate T-Rexes, Brontosauri and, most dangerous of all,



Velociraptors, with the intent of placing them within a massive safari park. However, it all goes horribly wrong when a traitorous employee sabotages the system and releases the dinosaurs. This is where Jurassic Park Mega-CD picks up the story. An icon-driven adventure, the player becomes Alan Grant — the only man who can sort things out. Doctor Grant is an expert on dinosaurs and realises he'll need to locate the newly-laid eggs to stop them spreading. But with only a handful of weapons and a sprawling map full of dangerous critters in front of him, he'll need more than his wits to get by.

CVG VERDICT

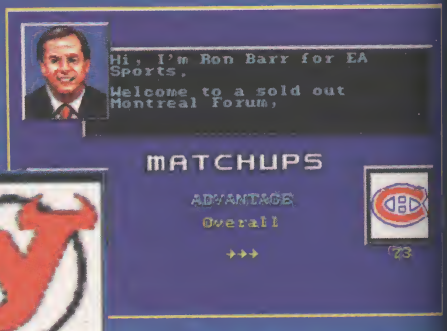
This engrossing arcade adventure really drops the player in the thick of things. The icon system is a doddle to pick up, and Grant performs all manner of actions as he searches for the eggs. There are simplistic shooting sequences, but the most impressive parts involve the FMV sequences. Occasionally a little slow-going, this is nevertheless a novel slant on a licence which has been done to death.



OVERALL

87

NHL HOCKEY '94



MEGA CD

SPORTS

£39.95



Take to the ice with this all-singing, all-dancing update of an old fave.

One of the first Megadrive games to emerge from EA is given the CD works as EA update NHL Hockey by adding all the latest teams, stats and moves. However, in keeping with other EA Sports CD updates, FMV sequences now also play a key part in the proceedings. Playwise, this is the same old thing



with the large sprites bashing into each other as in the cart game as they try to slam the puck into the opponent's goal. However, to celebrate the goals, the FMV kicks in with scenes of players celebrating and the crowd going loopy. Similarly, if a fight breaks out between two players, a digitised ruck is shown to emphasise the action.

CVG VERDICT

NHL Hockey is one of the most playable sports sims ever. The large sprites really look as if they hurt each other as they slam into walls. With already great gameplay, anything EA chose to add to the CD version was just icing on the cake. The FMV is impressive but never intrusive resulting in a highly enjoyable package. If you've got a Mega-CD and don't own another NHL cart, treat yourself.



OVERALL

90

DOOM



PC

SHOOT 'EM UP

£37.50

Whoever said there was violence on computer games?! Er... okay, so if anyone has a weak disposition, could they turn away now... This one's a splatterfest!



Just when you think games are all getting a bit tiresome and samey, what happens? Out comes the big, bad mutha of a game that scares the pants off you and breathes new life into your trigger finger. Doom! What a name and, quite frankly, what a game.







So Wolfenstein came first, but if you want your action, gorier, scarier and bloodthirstier than ever before, the buck stops here. Gameplay is simple enough; pick your difficulty level, which ranges from 'Please Don't Hurt Me' through to "Ultra Violence' (getting the picture?), then get out into the beautifully rendered 3D environment of corridors, dungeons, stairwells and beast-infested chambers and start blasting. Walking through

DOOM





each level, viewed from a first-person perspective, you've got to find the hidden exit to the next stage, picking up extra weapons, power-ups and health points along the way. Find the hidden passages and you find even better bonuses along the way. Not forgetting, as you go, to blow away the gargoyles, enemy troops, minotaurs and all round uglies on your way.

Five minutes into Doom and you soon get a feel for the game. As the blood, guts and intestines start spraying themselves around the walls, you very quickly realise that this game simply oozes atmosphere. Like a good horror movie, you just don't know what's going to jump out of the screen at you next. Hear those footsteps round the corner, someone breathing heavily in your ear, it's all here and, just in case you start getting a little smug at your success, just listen out for the tortured screams and gunfire just ahead of you.

Split into three main parts, each with about 15 levels, Doom features some awesome, scrolling action, from racing up stairs to cowering in ditches, depending on your disposition. Using the map feature helps you get around, but it also gives you an idea of the scale of this game — huge!

As you plunge into the unknown, usually in near darkness and feeling hopelessly naked with your starting weapon (does that pistol really do any damage?), the suspense is tremendous. Doom is, quite simply, a genuinely frightening game.

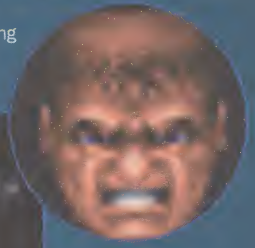


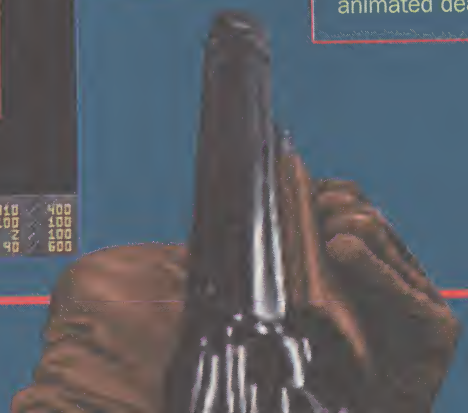




▲ Dacka! Dacka! There's nothing like working for the chain gang!







CVG VERDICT

There have been several attempts at 3D action games on the PC — Terminator Rampage, and the 3D parts of Jurassic Park, for example — but none of them come close to Doom. It looks better, sounds better, plays better and is altogether meaner, nastier, and harder than all of them put together. Some may say the gameplay gets a little repetitive as you progress but, seeing as you can try this out first as shareware for just £3.75, you'll soon find out if this style of over-the-top mayhem and violence suits you. If it does, then you're in for hours and hours of incredibly tense gameplay. Technically and visually, Doom is awesome and, as you progress, the range of weapons available is truly amazing, ranging from the all-powerful plasma weapon, to the gratuitous gore-frenzy of the chainsaw. What do you do? If you don't like this style of blood frenzy, you leave well alone but, if you think there's nothing wrong with a bout of animated death dealing, look no further.

OVERALL

93

INFERNO

■ PC

■ SIMULATION

■ £TBC

If you thought battling the Klingons was bad, try having a pop at the Rexxons in Digital Image Design's amazing new space combat outing...

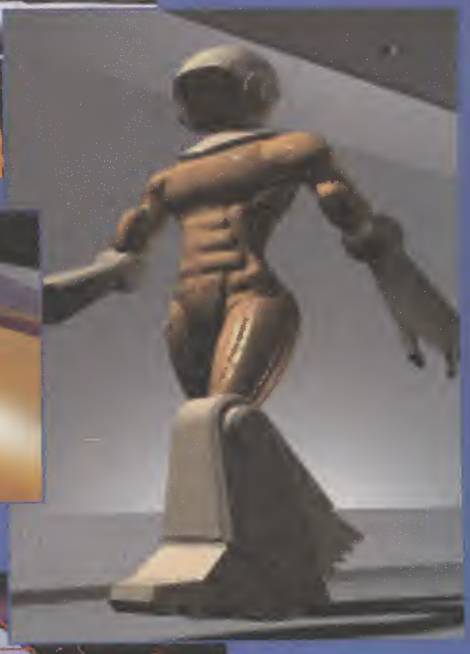
Just in case you reckon you've played anything like an 'interactive movie' before, take a check on those brainwaves and have a gander at Inferno first. With over 700 missions, three modes of play, (Arcade, Evolutionary and a full blown 'Director's Cut' campaign), and a starfighter stuffed to the gills with lasers and torpedoes, Inferno is not just a game, it's a full-blown, free-form, cinematic space opera.

The solar system is under attack from the vile Rexxon hordes and it's your job to defend it. It might sound like X-Wing, but on top of taking on the all-powerful enemy, you also get great cinematic mission briefings, digitised speech, a soundtrack by Goth band Alien Sex Fiend and a huge 3D world to fly around in.

If that weren't enough, how about massively varied missions, the chance to dive headlong into satellites, descend on planets and dogfight in the depths of huge alien spacecraft? Whether Inferno is better than X-Wing or TIE Fighter is up to you, but you're certainly getting a whole lot of action for your money here.



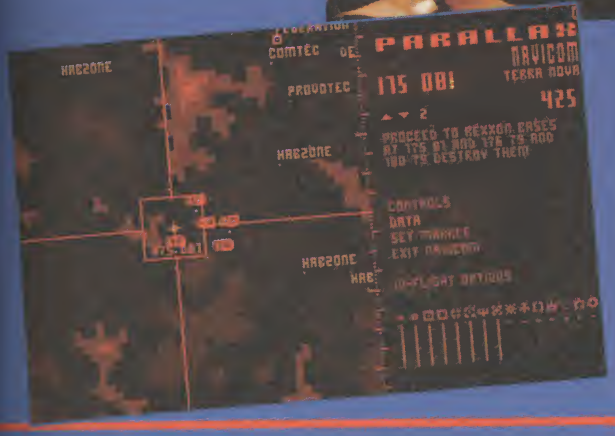




▲ F.A.B Virgil, I've got my clean pants on.









CVG VERDICT

If you're a TIE Fighter fan, it's no surprise if a first glance at Inferno gives you a slight feeling of deja vu. But, if you take time out to sit down and play this beast, you soon realise that it's just huge. Some of the missions take up to 45 minutes to complete, the attention to detail is superb and it includes all the features of a top-notch flight sim, but with the feel and playability of an arcade game. The disc accessing may be a little slow, but if you've got a CD-ROM drive, go get it now.

OVERALL

93

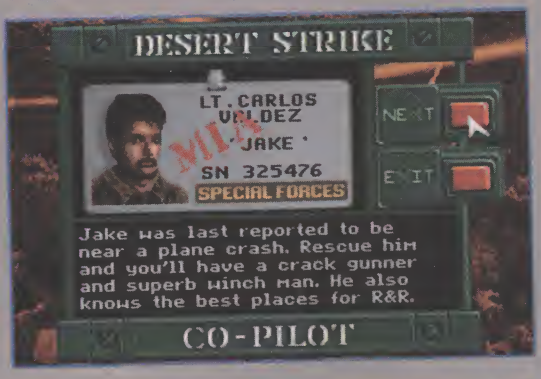
DESERT STRIKE

PC

SHOOT 'EM UP

£34.99

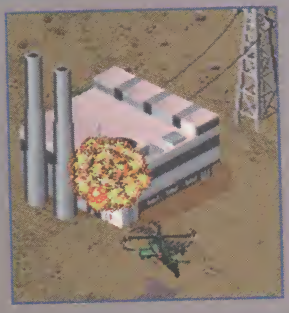
All is apparently not well in the Middle East. Nobody likes a bully, but how to deal with them? Ask the Americans... GUNG HO!!



Despite the controversy when Desert Strike first hit the consoles after the Gulf War, you can't argue with chart-busting sales and two even better sequels. Three years on and the original finally hits the PC.

Climb aboard the AH64 Assault helicopter and do your worst against the forces of the Middle-Eastern dictator (that's Kilbaba to you), taking out chemical plants and SCUD missile bases as part of your daily routine.

Despite the fact that both console sequels feature far more strategy, the original game's still great and, at the end of the day, there's nowt wrong with some good, old-fashioned blasting when your hands are on that shiny joystick.









CVG VERDICT

So the console sequels have more strategy? Strategy Schmategy. Desert Strike still stands head and shoulders above conventional shoot 'em ups, with responsive controls and three-quarter viewpoint. So for PC users, the wait has been well worthwhile. Subtle it ain't, but if you like your gun-action on the heavy side, just keep those terrorists in your sights.

OVERALL

82

THE CHAOS ENGINE

PC

SHOOT 'EM UP

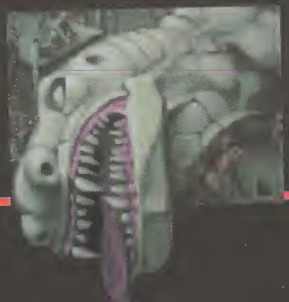
£32.99

Looks like the Bitmap Brothers are powering up with a new assortment of lethal weapons. If you can't beat them, join them...

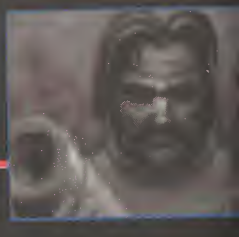


What's bound to happen when that mad old scientist starts playing around with the space-time continuum? Yep, it's all going to end in tears, which is where you come in. The time machine has turned against its creator, spreading evil chaos across the land and it's up to you to play the role of separate characters to sort things out. Although Chaos Engine has the look of an out-and-out Gauntlet-style shooter, there's some subtle thinking to be done here too. Each of the characters has its own talents, which you must use carefully to collect objects and explore the different areas. You soon get the hang of swapping between the two characters, but it's a big, bad old world out there..









CVG VERDICT

If you liked Gauntlet, this one's a must. The mix between out-and-out blasting and strategic shooting is excellent and the way you can power-up to really potent weapons fast makes the game even more playable. The two-player option definitely works best but there's still plenty of action here for solo players. If you like a bit of one-upmanship, go tell your mate that the PC version's the fastest yet — hah!

OVERALL

89

THEME PARK

PC

BUSINESS SIM

£39.99

Roll up! Roll up! You've seen the hype, bought the advance tickets, now sit yourself down and take a ride on Bullfrog's roller-coaster success story...



CVG VERDICT

Don't let the hard work put you off! This is one fun-packed, option-stacked outing that keeps you hooked for good. Everything you do has an effect on other areas of the park, so you have to keep your wits about you at all times. But with the cute graphics and great sound, you won't mind keeping an eye on your creations. Theme Park is a surefire winner in the entertainment stakes.



OVERALL

92

If you thought bottling up the courage to get onto a real theme park ride was tough, how about actually building one and trying to run it for a living?

Starting off with a limited budget, you get to lay out your park and drop in a few stomach-wrenching rides before the public start turning up in hordes to test them out. If they like it, you make money. It's as simple as that. Or is it? Building the big rides costs a lot of dosh and, if you don't plan your park properly, you'll have people eating, going straight onto the white-knuckle rides and promptly throwing up on your nice clean paths. Think carefully about your creations! Start hiring and firing your staff and you soon discover there's more to life than just the fun of the fair!





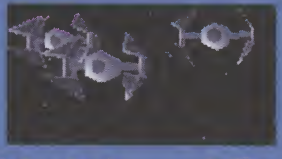
TIE FIGHTER

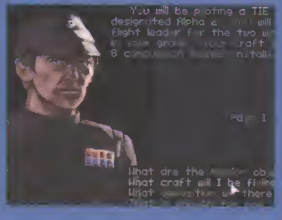
PC

SIMULATION

£49.99

Who says the forces of good always win?! Slip some black togs on for a change and blast those sweetie-pie nicies back to Tattooine.









After dark...Tia Maria. After X-Wing... a blistering sequel which lets you try some Imperial attire for a change. Set after the battle for Hoth (portrayed in The Empire Strikes Back, the second Star Wars movie), the rebels are fleeing from their shattered base and as a young, thrusting Imperial pilot, you must try to stop them. Featuring new Gouraud-shaded graphics, TIE Fighter lets you pilot a whole host of Imperial hardware, including bog-standard TIE Fighters, Assault Gunboats and the Advanced TIE Fighter. With three difficulty levels, the ability to call for reinforcements, intelligent wingmen (ie no own goals), the stirring Star Wars theme music and the lavish cinematic intro, TIE Fighter is probably the most atmospheric game you'll play this year, quite apart from being a guaranteed smash.





CVG VERDICT

'Ere we go! 'Ere we go! Let's face it, being the big bad guys' top pilot is far more fun than being goodie two-shoes. For a start, the ships sound better! Gamewise, TIE Fighter is far more involved than X-Wing, thanks to the many, varied sub-missions and the strong plot. OK, both games are similar, but you can't get too much of a good thing, can you? Compared with Inferno, TIE Fighter is more simmy with bags of character and atmosphere. Easily the best spaceflight sim out there for the PC right now.



OVERALL

92

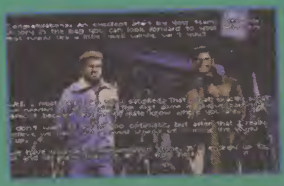
ON THE BALL

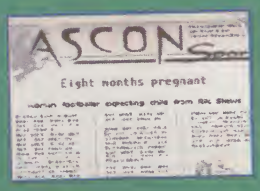
■ PC

■ STRATEGY

■ £34.99

We kicked them off the park in '66, but has the German football strategy improved since then? Let's see now...











Footy management games have never been known for user-friendly interfaces, but it looks like On The Ball's point-and-click style of operation, more usually seen in adventure games, may well prove a breakthrough.

Like standard management games, it's up to you to pick and organise your squad, arrange transfers and run the whole shebang both on, and off, the field. What gives this one the edge, though, is that you've got real people management as well. What happens if the team goes down with food poisoning, or if a bomb alert postpones big match training? With its huge 112-page manual, what we have here is the thinking footy fan's footy management game, if you catch my through ball from the midfield..

■ CVG VERDICT

What makes this game a winner is that non-strategy fans can pick it up in a trice. The graphical approach is unique and the game itself is so comprehensive that you don't really need to look elsewhere to cover all the angles of football management. A whole lot of thought has gone into On The Ball, but the only reservation is that sometimes you can make wrong decisions without realising until it's too late. Then again, isn't that just like real life?

OVERALL

89

SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD

■ PC-CD ROM

■ ADVENTURE

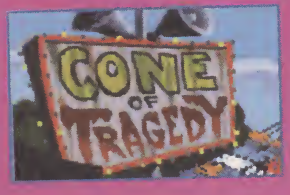
■ £45.99

Call K9 a detective? Those Doctor Who four-parters would have been solved in half the time with this duo. By the way, just what is the genus of bunnies?











Like most CD conversions of floppy games, Sam & Max is greatly enhanced by a 'talkie' script. Other than that, it's the same wacky humour throughout, as the duo work as a team on their trips to various tourist camps, solving a succession of disappearances. Although Max (that's the doggy) is your main character, you do need to use Sam to solve some of the challenges, and the twisted animation sequences which cut in at various points to shift the pace of the game are a real bonus. There's more than enough challenge here, but as it's the same challenge as the floppy version, is it worth shelling out for again?

■ CVG VERDICT

So the challenge of the CD is the same as the floppy? All this applies to so many conversions to CD-ROM, but what makes Sam & Max different is that all the old jokes and humorous touches work so much better when spoken, rather than written.Because of this, you get so much more involved in what is already an excellent game. The two personalities are excellent and the switching between the pair works beautifully. What gives this adventure another edge that you get straight into the action from the start, without having to faff about with item gathering before you can get into the plot.



OVERALL

84

SIM CITY 2000

Take one of the best games ever, soup up the graphics, stir in a host of new features and options and a good pinch of fresh disasters. Et voila — Sim City 2000...



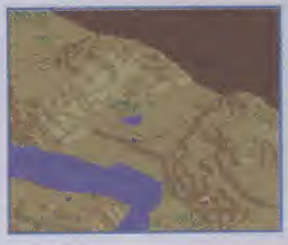
PC

SIMULATION

£39.99

Many companies churn out sequel after sequel with only a few cosmetic changes with the hope of making a quick buck. Not so with Sim City 2000. The aim of the game hasn't changed — you as the Mayor of the realm must build from scratch a thriving, successful city in the middle of the desert, persuade people to come and live there and then keep them happy enough to stay there. Control your budgets, raking in cash through taxes and business ventures — but watch out for those disasters which could range from house fires to alien invasions.

Boasting 3D graphics and the ability to zoom in close on any part of your empire, Sim City 2000's other new features include subways, tunnels, water treatment plants and you've also got a terrain editor that lets you customise the landscape before you build. Okay, you've got your tools, get building.





CVG VERDICT

Who would have thought that building a city could form the basis of one of the most addictive games of all time? Maxis obviously never had any doubts because the firm has produced a sequel which has thrown the majority of the game-playing public intro PC ecstasy. There's an amazing batch of new features and options with absolutely astonishing attention to detail (such as traffic lights which actually change) which really drag you into the game and keep you there. For ages. And ages. The control method has been made more user-friendly, graphically the whole game is tops and the new viewing points add a completely new dimension to the Sim City experience. If you haven't bought Sim City 2000 already, go and do so. Now.

OVERALL

94

MYST





PC-CD ROM

ADVENTURE

£49.99

Get those brains in gear for through the Myst something rather special is emerging...

Come to my island, child. Yes, come quickly, for time is short. There is much knowledge to be gleaned from the mysterious place that is Myst Island. Your quest is to track down the four mystical Myst Books, the pages of which will bring you everything your heart could desire. So come off that sunken ship and venture into the four strange sub-worlds of this fair isle where puzzles aplenty await to pickle your juicy young brain.

There are clues to help you progress through your point and click adventure — but not too many. Good luck, my little one...







CVG VERDICT

Many adventures turn out to be a big let down by giving away too much too soon — not so with Myst. This game is rock 'ard and all the better for it. Graphically it's stunning as is the atmospheric music. It's also a really huge game and the puzzles are of the highest quality requiring tons of lateral thinking as do the mass of sub-games which are interspersed throughout. The point and click interface works a treat — the only thing that's a bit of a let down is that the whole thing is flip-screen and not scrolling but that's to be expected for a Windows game. Damn fine game though and highly recommended — but not for the faint-hearted.



OVERALL

90

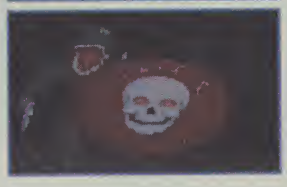
THE ELDER SCROLLS: ARENA

■ PC
■ RPG
■ £34.99

Slash 'em, beat 'em... do what you want to 'em as long as you kill 'em. Oh, and wander about a bit too...









Okay, you're the good guy — that goes without saying — and your top mate has been wasted by a particularly evil magician. Naturally you're a bit racked off with this so your only quest in life now is to wreak revenge and right a few wrongs. Being a pretty clever magician though, this geezer's not too easy to find AND he's surrounded himself with rock 'ard opponents whom you must waste using a combination of traditional slashery and some mean sorcery AND he's locked you in a deepest darkest dungeon from where you must (a) kill everybody and (b) escape posthaste. Then it's a matter of ambling around the HUGE landscape, chatting to the locals for clues, shopping for weapons, armour and spells (or, if you can't buy them, stealing them) and basically wasting anyone who gets in your way.

CVG VERDICT

On first glance, this one — with it's 3D perspective and tendency to extreme violence — came across as a bit of a Doom clone. But after a bit of play, you realise that The Elder Scrolls is a bit tasty in its own right. It's a biggie for starters and rather than having to concentrate on one task at a time, you can go for them willy-nilly which will cheer up those who are lacking on the concentration stakes. The 3D perspective works really well and its nice to combine a bit of brainpower with some gratuitous hacking and slashing. The whole thing is really easy to get into and play and all in all is one of the best RPGs we've seen all year. Well worth a look.



OVERALL
90

MEGARACE

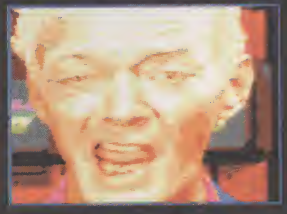
■ PC-CD ROM
■ ARCADE
■ £49.99

Fasten those seat belts and prepare for some mean speed in this far-out racer from the future.

It's gameshow time! But this is the far-flung future where the stakes are higher, the risks are phenomenal and the rewards are simply marvellous. Hosted by the seedy megastar Lance Boyle, contestants must jump in their ultra-powerful speed machines and race at impossible rates around a variety of tracks which range from simple urban streets through asteroid belts and even underwater. There are 16 to conquer over which you must outrun your opponents if you can, or shoot them if you can't. Ammo can be found scattered en route as are things like speed ups and slow downs and there are also nifty bonus levels to be had if you're 'specially hot at your trade. Each car has its own strengths and weaknesses so you could choose to go for fast, but vulnerable on the armour side, or slower but laden with more arms than an octopus. The choice is yours...

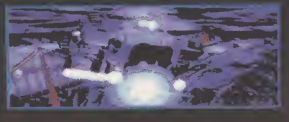








▲ I like driving in my car, it's not quite a Jaguar...





CVG VERDICT

Round of applause for Mindscape and developers Cryo, cos this game is stunning! The gameplay may be simplistic but on the addictiveness stakes it can't be beat. And it's tough too, especially on the later levels with lots of elements to keep you occupied so you won't be cruising through it in too much of a hurry. Graphically it's superb with a wide range of highly inventive backdrops. The whole thing has been designed to give you a feeling of really being there. The simplicity of the game may cast some doubts about its longevity but we don't think so. Check it out.



OVERALL
91

BATTLE ISLE 2

PC-CD ROM
STRATEGY
£49.99





The original Battle Isle was a bit of all right in itself but now Bluebyte has bounced back with something bigger and better. Take up your arms soldier...

Join the army, travel the world, make new friends and KILL THEM. This is the general order of the day in this smart sequel from Bluebyte because this a strategy war sim and winning is all that counts. You as commander must marshal your forces, beat the enemy into the ground and capture the opponents' HQ. There are tanks, buggies, planes, submarines and masses of artillery at your disposal to help with your quest for victory. Take aim... FIRE!



CVG VERDICT

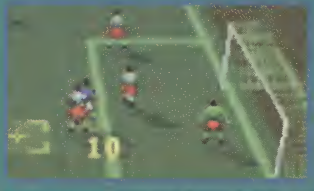
Although on first appearance, Battle Isle 2 doesn't look up to much , the more you progress the less the rather ropey graphics matter and the more engrossed you get. Unlike the prequel, this game has a plot and a storyline which drags you in and keeps you hooked, distracting you from the repetitive grind of warfare. It's a massive game which requires a huge amount of strategy — the only down point is that it takes far too long to make the moves.

OVERALL

88

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

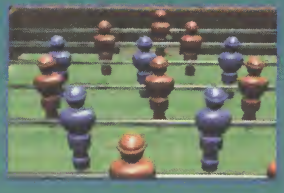
PC
SIMULATION
£39.99





If footy be the food of love, let's make damn sure EA keep churning out those lovable FIFA conversions.

Here we have that rare breed of game that converts well to all formats, and it looks especially good on the PC. It's faster, it's smoother, it's really quite a groover...! Sorry. FIFA's fab diagonal viewpoint, intelligent opponents and endless moves combine to give you probably the most realistic footy sim yet. 'Nuff said?



CVG VERDICT

OK, so the PC version doesn't feature the five-player multi-tap option of the Super NES game, but whaddya want? Without doubt, this is the best PC soccer sim on the market. The crowd, the tension, the atmosphere — it's all there and, even if there are times when you don't quite feel 100 percent in control of the play, you'll have to go all the way to Wembley (that's Wembley in Guatemala) and back to get anything better.

OVERALL

86

STAR TREK 25TH ANNIVERSARY

PC-CD ROM
GRAPHIC ADVENTURE
£49.99





Space the final frontier... We come in peace, shoot to kill... It's worse than that he's dead Jim... Or any other sad trekkie cliche you can think of...

It's all very well these bald English blokes taking over the helm of the Starship Enterprise and even the Bionic woman coming in as the latest Captain, we hear, but there's only ever been one true skipper to explore new lands and go where no man has gone before and that's Captain James T Kirk. Realising this, Interplay has come up with this graphic adventure to celebrate the crew's 25th anniversary and even roped in William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and co. to do the voice-overs. Take the controls of the Enterprise and take on alien ships, explore strange planets and do what this bunch do naturally.



CVG VERDICT

Okay, so Interplay didn't really go all out on this one to improve the playability or graphics stakes compared with the original but hey, they were pretty damn good in the first place. The addition of the actual cast's voices makes it so much better and this game brilliantly captures the mood of the TV series as well as being eminently playable. It's a must-buy for all trekkies and highly recommended even if you're not.

OVERALL

90

WRATH OF THE GODS

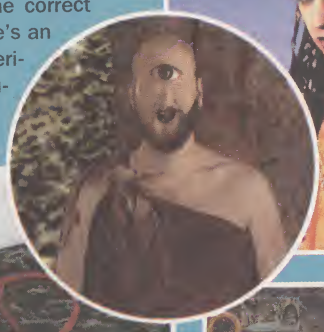
APPLE MACINTOSH

ADVENTURE

£34.99

They gave the modern world its culture and certainly the English the basis of a language and they gave us kebabs — what better reasons to create a game based on this ancient race...

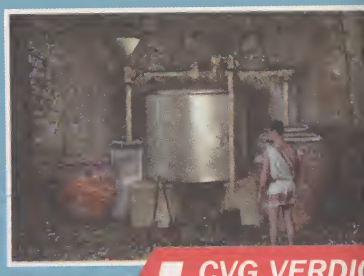
Forget your lurid pub stories — get yourself down the library and read up on the Greek legends, there's more smut, gore and horror in those than... um... something that has lots of smut, gore and horror in it AND you'll feel all smug and educated when you finish. With this in mind, Maxis has pounced on the Greek legends as a damn good basis for a Mac game. In this movie-style adventure, the aim is to claim the throne — but the path to the crown ain't easy — there's loads of monsters to battle, people to question and the correct paths to be trodden before you get there. There's an on-line Oracle to be consulted if you get into serious trouble — but this guy's greedy and he usually demands cash for his services. Pick up your sword and go for that crown.





▲ I wandered lonely as a cloud... and damn me if I didn't see a three-headed mythical beasty — Aaaargh!







▲ Blow me — that's the last time I go on the Slimfast diet!



▲ You don't see many Gods sitting around corridors like that nowadays do you?



◀ "Right you stand over there, I'll stand over here. Now, act natural. Okay, lights, camera, and ACTION...!" An important scene from the ancient Greek equivalant of Home and Away.

CVG VERDI

On first glance, Wrath of the Gods may look co cated but one of its fine points is actually its plicity. The click and point interface is a doddl use since there are only five main game icons the puzzles are rudimentary, made easier since can see what's going on and there aren't many ferent commands. There are masses of charac in the game and differing locations which keep interested all the way through. Hardened adve ers may find it a little easy but everybody else almost certainly love it.

OVERALL

8

SIM CITY 2000

APPLE MACINTOSH

SIMULATION

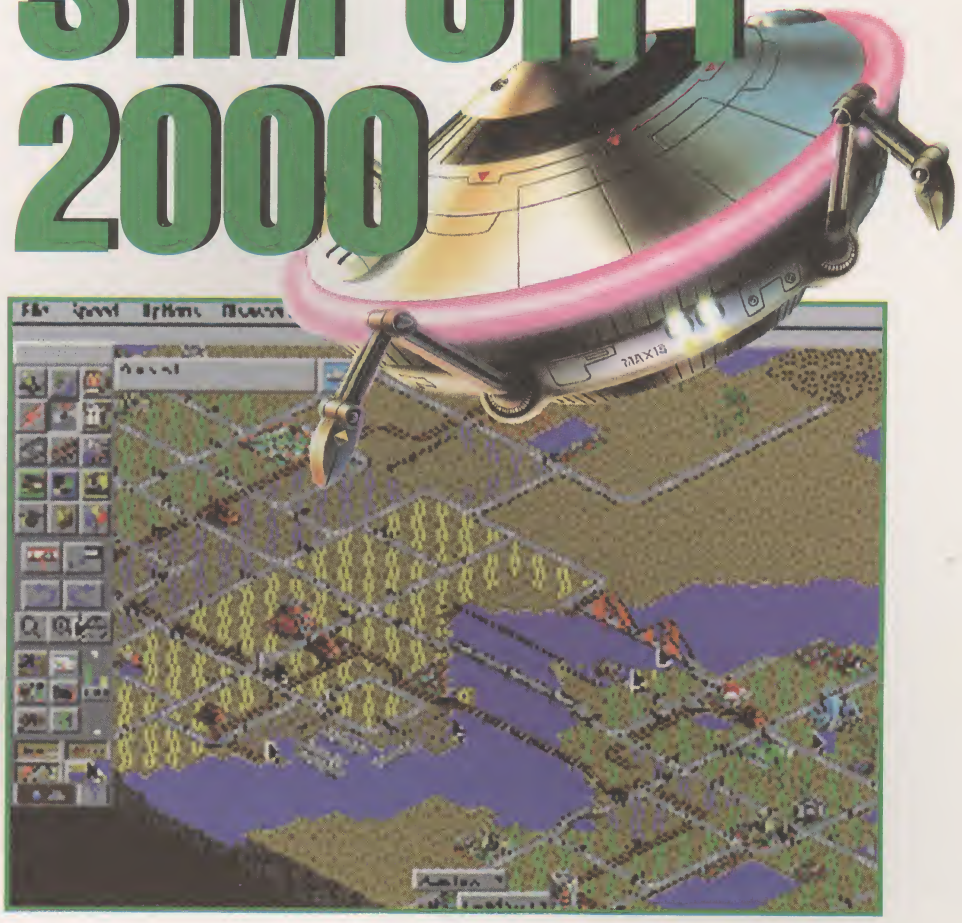
£39.99

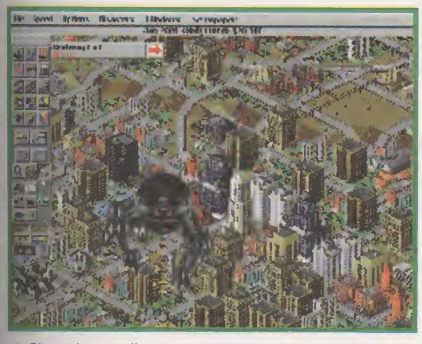
Read all about it! Mayor tied up in knots over alien invasion threats! Are you sure? Anything can happen in downtown Sim City 2000.

The original SimCity has to be one of the most influential games to appear in the last decade, even though it had a few teething problems before it was released. Who would have thought that a simulation of town planning would ever make it to the all-time best-selling games lists? Nevertheless, it made it there in sharp fashion and has stuck there ever since. Four years on and Maxis has supplied the sequel, in the shape of SimCity 2000.

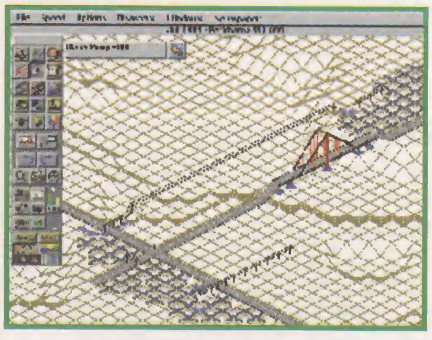
The idea is the same — you are Mayor of all you survey, striving to create a thrusting metropolis from out of the wilderness, and being in control of the entire city budget, from taxes to business incentives and social services to parking fines.

On top of the original features, SimCity 2000 boasts amazing 3D graphics and three levels of zoom, allowing you to view your creation from the 'Gods', or to close in to each of your neighbourhoods. With new features like subways, tunnels, water treatment plants and futuristic arcologies (cities within buildings), SimCity 2000 takes the original game into new dimensions. Add to that the terrain editor, allowing you to customise the landscape before you build and you've got probably the most powerful and most graphic simulator yet. But remember, all of the decisions in this outing are yours. Whatever you decide goes, but don't expect your Sim citizens to be happy with it.

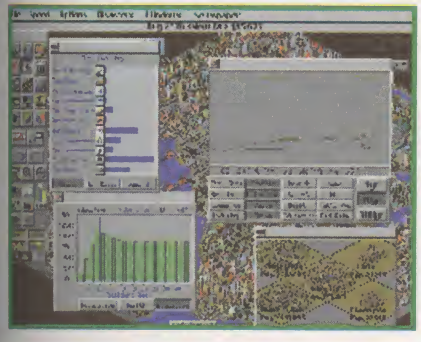




▲ Oh yeah, an alien spaceship — the sort of thing you see hanging around Brixton every day.



▲ Quick, someone call the plumber — me underground pipes are all clogged up.





CVG VERDICT

The original Sim City was a benchmark in its own right but Maxis has packed this new version with masses more features, changed the control method to become more user-friendly and come up with something guaranteed to provide weeks of uninterrupted fun — even if you've played the original to death. Every aspect of the game has been souped up: for example, whereas each of the city-building icons in the original Sim City allowed you to perform one action, in 2000, they're more like an index to an array of options. The graphics are amazing and the viewing points really allow you to get the best view of your handiwork. In short, SimCity 2000 is a game that's going to keep you hooked. Great stuff!

OVERALL

94

LIBE

AMIGA

ADVENTURE

£34.99

Easily the best CD32 game to date, Liberation has come to the Amiga, and it's just as good as the silver disc version.

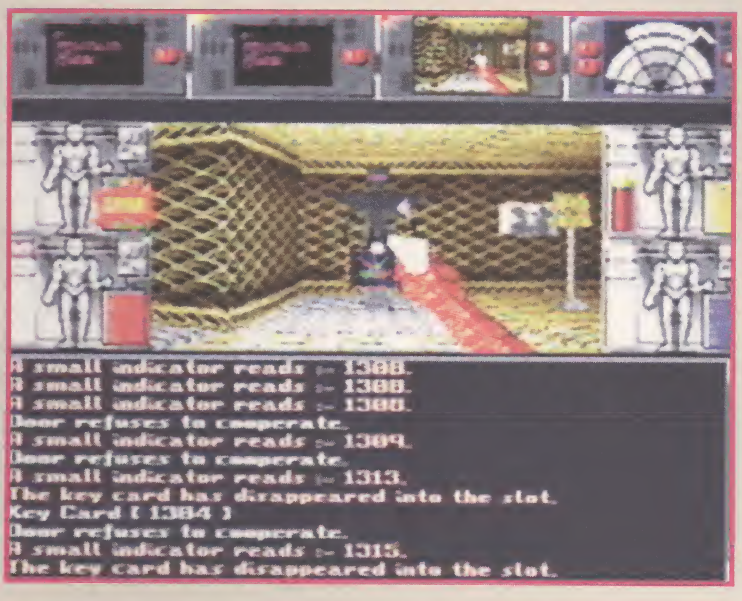
Imagine a futuristic city, one full of dark walkways and suspicious characters. One where you have been dropped, alone, with no sign of help or a friend. The time is the 29th century, and the police robots are murdering prisoners. This is something that no-one will actually believe, and you have been brought here to prove that dark and horrible fact.

You don't enter the city yourself, however. Instead, you control four battle robots who walk en masse, or divided through the many buildings and alleys of the city, investigating by either talking to the people they meet, breaking into rooms, opening safes for keys or clues, or entering the computer systems of the city and interrogating every database they can to find their leads.

Each of the robots is fully customisable, with a variety of tools to aid and abet you in your hunt. The screen itself is also customisable, so you can lay the game out exactly how you want it. After all you're going to spend so much time concentrating on the thread of the plot itself, you don't want to be wasting time figuring out where the options are.

The whole city is texture mapped, and if you're running off a hard drive, you have a choice of 71 different textures to cover the walls with, instead of the standard 4 you can choose from when you run from floppy. All the textures themselves are pre-rendered to hard drive, a system that takes a little time, but the over effect is worth it when you finish.







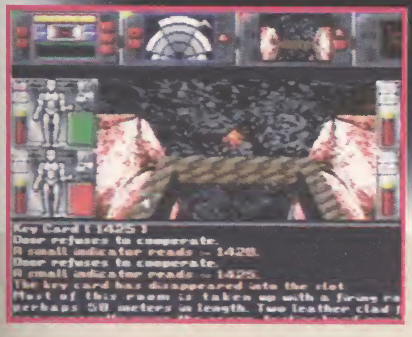
RATION



▲ The peasants are revolting! Are you with 'em or are you going to whip their butts? The choice is yours.

CVG VERDICT

This is simply one of the best games ever devised. A very clever graphic system makes a large part of the city instantly recognisable, and the amount of character and bleakness in the game just draws you in without you noticing, and before you know it it's the middle of the night. Running on an A1200, the game is identical to the CD32 version, bar the music and speech of course, and on the slower machines the game doesn't run as well, but really this isn't the sort of game where you spend a lot of time rushing about anyway. You need 1.5 Megabytes free to play it, which is a bit of a shame, but if you've got the space and the time, then there aren't many better ways to spend your money.





◀ Our hero tries to enter the teleport with his weapons firmly strapped on — but the guard on duty has other ideas...

OVERALL

92

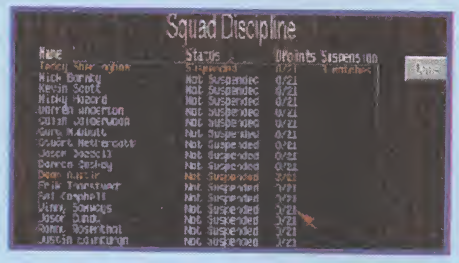
■ AMIGA

■ SPORTS SIMULATION

■ £29.99

They did it! It's a hat trick for Krisalis, as they release yet another game on their extremely profitable licensing deal.





MANCHESTER UNITED PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Soccer management games are ten a penny these days, but then they always have been. The reason is, the average punter who buys one of these will buy every single one out there, even though the amount of variation between them is so limited. Basically, there are only so many functions that a soccer manager can actually perform, even if you include them in the training and accounts side of running a club.

The software industry has almost run out of ideas on the subject, and sadly is resorting to finding nicer and nicer ways of presenting the same old options and the same old number crunching. Krisalis seem to be one of the last bastions of the soccer management world now still coming up with new ideas.



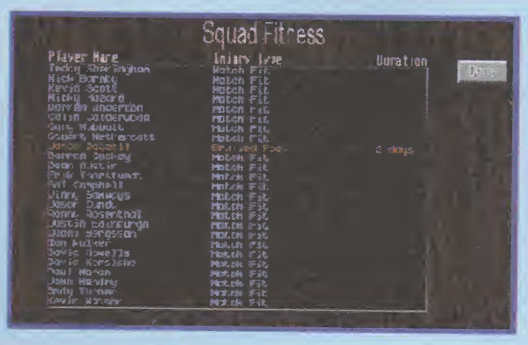




This time around it's still a standard management title to a certain point, where you try to find the best players you can for the best prices you can, and then lay them out on the pitch in a way that works. Added to this are two important differences. One is the 'Tacti-grid', a system whereby you can position your players on the pitch and decide how they are going to play when they are off the ball, and the other is a Sensible Soccer style arcade game, where you actually play the team you've laid out. It's surprising the difference in tactics you can make simply by sticking a midfielder out onto the wing.

All this is lovingly coated in a host of options and ways to play the game, from single friendlies to cups and leagues, where absolutely everything can be tailored. CVG said Krisalis could be onto a winner with it. Time said that they were.





■ CVG VERDICT

Manchester United Premier League Champions covers a lot of bases, from management to strategy to arcade, but this it somehow manages to do successfullu without weakening at any point. The tactical side of the game is easily the strong point, laid out in an original and easy to understand format, yet extremely powerful. With practise, you can learn how your opponent plays, and then completely turn the tables with a couple of line up changes. The arcade section is a lot of fun, though nowhere near as good as Sensible Soccer, obviously. That said, the package as a whole is extremely comprehensive, and one that everyone who has any kind of interest in football should rush out any buy.

◀ This game features statistics galore — all crucial for successful football management. Here, one of the key strikers has hurt his footsie so he's out of the action for three days. Shame really, since you're playing Blackburn tomorrow!

OVERALL

90

ON THE BALL

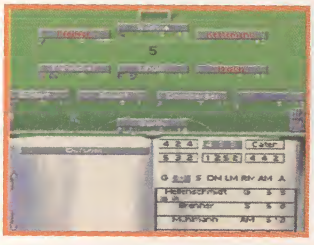
AMIGA

SPORTS SIMULATION

£29.99

We may have beaten them in 1966, but that hasn't stopped German software house Ascon from coming up with one of the best management titles ever.

Ascon was responsible for The Patrician, one of the best looking strategy games for years, and the company has now taken its approach of stunning visuals and simple gameplay to new heights with On The Ball — World Cup Edition. Take your country's team through the qualifying stages, and try to get them to the finals. Participate in press conferences, or just relax by the pool — your role as manager can be as simple or as complex as you like.









▲ Play this game, it's great. It'll improve your looks and your success with the opposite sex. Like this bloke. Er-hum.

CVG VERDICT

The key thing with On The Ball is that it is incredibly easy to get into the game, and even easier to become completely immersed in the whole thing. Gone are the reams of numbers and options, and in their place come some glorious illustrations and the most comprehensive and well thought out game system ever. The nicest thing about the way the game is presented is that you feel like you are dealing with real people instead of numbers. What a great game.

OVERALL

89

RUFF N' TUMBLE

AMIGA

PLATFORM

£29.99

Mr Platforms himself, Jason Perkins, shows the rest of the world exactly how it's done.

If you've done as many platform games over the years as Jason Perkins has, chances are you know exactly what makes a good one. This is probably why Wunderkind's Ruff N' Tumble, a tale of a small boy against an army of robots inside a magical rabbit warren is so damn polished. Collecting marbles to open the exit at the end of the level, Ruff has to blow away everything he can find, using a variety of weapons ranging from a small shooter to homing missiles and a flame thrower!







▲ You stand there with your silly tin hat and your silly gun that looks like a trumpet and expect me not to shoot you?! Pah!





CVG VERDICT

The initial verdict on Ruff N' Tumble is that it's nothing new, but it most definitely is a prime example of the genre. Exceptionally playable in the extreme, the game features just the right balance of cuteness and satisfying violence. The weapons are worked out to feel just right, and the end result is a warm, glowing feeling and a temptation to punch the air whenever you take out a particularly tough bad guy.



OVERALL

86

UNIVERSE

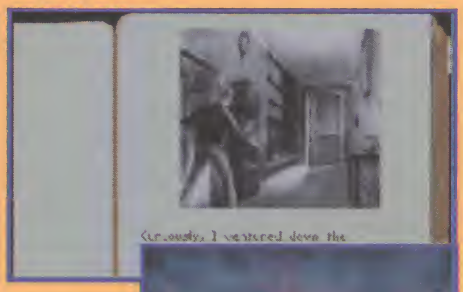
AMIGA

ARCADE ADVENTURE

£34.99

Curse Of Enchantia was Core's first attempt at a top quality adventure game. This is part two...

You should have listened to what your mother said. Messing around with time machines is a bad idea, as Boris Verne discovered when he pressed the wrong button at the wrong time and ended up lost in a strange universe. Worst of all, he's only got you — the average gameplayer — to help him find his way home in this point and click graphic adventure, styled very much along the lines of Beneath A Steel Sky and Monkey Island.







CVG VERDICT

The most outstanding thing about this game, apart from the fact that it took so long to write, are the graphics. Technically, the game is incredible, showing 256 colour screens on non-AGA machines is quite a feat. What's more, the entertaining script and the logical yet taxing gameplay easily match up, and the end result is a game that should appeal to all. Easy to use and very funny to play, this is one of the best Amiga adventures to date.

OVERALL

87

BODY BLOWS AGA

AMIGA

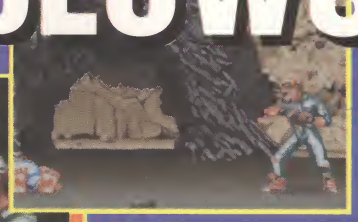
BEAT EM UP

£14.99

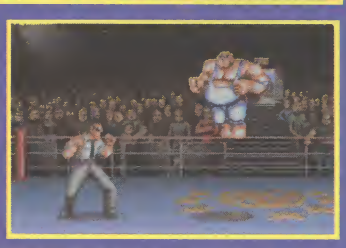
The guys at Team 17 are a hard bunch, especially after a couple of drinks. Maybe that's why they put out such good combat games...

So Streetfighter 2 Turbo Nutter Extra Edition with enhanced combo backflip isn't to be released on the Amiga. So what? Team 17 has always done particularly well in that department, which is why Body Blows has always been such a success. The premise is simple: play one of 21 extremely unusual fighters across a variety of backdrops, and see if you can demolish the opposition. If that isn't enough, there's a variety of play modes, from single player to tag team, that should keep you involved for a while.













CVG VERDICT

Body Blows has always been a good example of how to do an Amiga beat 'em up, and this AGA version is the perfect enhancement. There really is no competition on the Amiga and this game, which borrows enough from the arcades to be familiar, but uses the Amiga to its best abilities to create the ideal game for the machine. The sound effects are superb, and the lack of in-game music serves to add to the atmosphere. Wacky characters, fantastic game. Go and check it out, right now.

OVERALL

88

BANSHEE





AMIGA

SHOOT EM UP

£25.99

Take to the skies, thanks to Core Design, but be prepared for a little turbulence up there...

One of the most simple game ideas ever was that of the shoot 'em up. Take a craft, any craft, put them on a scrolling backdrop, give them a gun and let them kill things. Core Design has taken this to the extreme with Banshee, adding five levels of mass mayhem, where you in your biplane can kill everything from gunboats to polar bears, as you fly from the sea to a military base the other side of metropolis.



▲ He flies through the air with the greatest of ease, that magnificent man in his killing machine...





CVG VERDICT

They say what comes around, goes around, and it's been a while since the Amiga saw a top notch, vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. Banshee does nothing more than take the classic old 1942 and turn it into something 'now'. This is said with all credit to Core, who happily and readily admit the fact. Superb visuals combined with atmospheric sound give the game a real arcade feel, and the fact that it's incredibly difficult, but not impossible, should keep you coming back to it for quite some time.

OVERALL

85

HEIMDALL 2

AMIGA

ARCADE ADVENTURE

£34.99

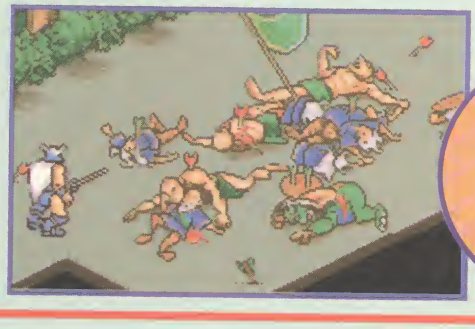
When it comes to bags of character and a little cartoon action, you don't have to look much further than Derby, or so Core say.

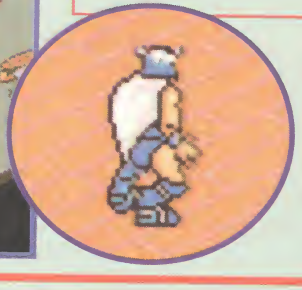
Heimdall has returned, and this time he's bigger and better than ever. The first Heimdall title was a great game, with loads of fun scenes (including the famous hitting the girl in the face with an axe segment), but had too many shortcomings. Not ones to be outdone, The 8th Day has beavered away to set things right, and this larger, more involved sequel is the result.



▲ Heimdall vowed never to use the same decorators ever again because his hall, quite frankly, turned out atrocious.







CVG VERDICT

Heimdall 2 is a well thought out, and very well structured adventure game. The plot unfolds nicely as you wander around the isometric 3D world, visiting kings and paupers alike, helping all in your quest for Loki. It doesn't really push the limits of the machine particularly, but just ten minutes exploring the first island will show you that this is a solid adventure not to be taken lightly, despite the cartoon graphics. As a sequel, it rights all the wrongs of the original, ending up with a game that no self respecting Amiga adventurer should be without.

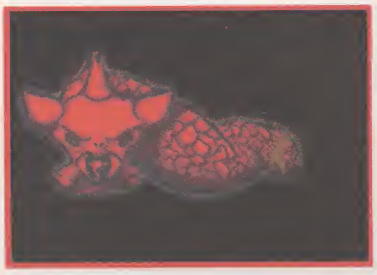
OVERALL

87

K240

■ AMIGA
■ STRATEGY
■ £29.99

Graeme Ing is a man with space on his mind. Here's a game where you can watch lots of rocks milling about.







Asteroids might not make the most exciting backdrop for a game, and the thought of some that move very slowly through almost empty space is even less exciting.

But if those asteriods were full of precious ores, and there was an alien presence in the sector of space known as K240 who also wanted the ores, and were willing to kill you for them, then that might liven things up a little.

In fact, that sounds like a damn good idea for a strategy game, particularly one to follow up Gremlin's smash hit Utopia. Quick, call the copyright office, I've got an idea. Oh, they've beaten me to it.





CVG VERDICT

K240 is a masterpiece of strategic excellence. Thousands of options, all of which you'll use at one point or another, a brilliant control system, a gripping and atmospheric presentation and a manual the size of a houseboat make this one of the best strategy titles ever, on any machine!

OVERALL
89

PUTTY SQUAD

■ AMIGA
■ PLATFORM
■ £29.99

I remember the days when you could take something like an egg, and use it to pick up your favourite comics...



Super Putty was one of the most versatile Amiga characters ever. This handy little chap could stretch, bend, morph and generally transform himself into whatever shape he needed to be to solve the puzzles Phil Thornton threw at him.

Now he's back in a larger and funnier sequel, with all the cartoon mayhem of the original. Intended at first to be a Vietnam adventure, the game went through a lot of changes and ended up being a Rambo-style POW rescue, with an aging DJ popping up here and there.









CVG VERDICT

The hard control method of the original, plus the illogical puzzles were the two points where Super Putty really fell down. Both have now been fixed for this AGA only sequel, and the music and sound effects have been boosted beyond belief. Now extremely playable, Putty Squad is wildly addictive, and if you don't laugh all the way through, we'd be very surprised.

OVERALL
87

SIMON THE SORCERER

AMIGA

ADVENTURE

£39.99

Does it really only take one man from Sutton Coldfield to show the world that you don't need to be LucasArts to create fantastic adventures.

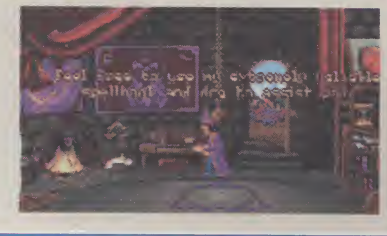


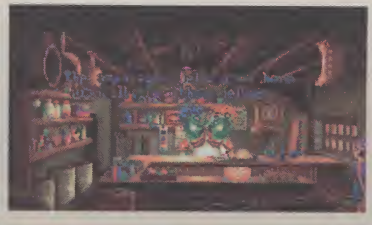




Simon isn't actually a sorcerer as the name of the game implies. He's a young chap who has been pulled through his uncle's hat to another world, where he has to get his bearings and then learn to be a sorcerer, so that he can escape back to his home and birthday party.

Along the way he meets some of the strangest characters seen in a point and click adventure, such as the Swampling — a small green person with a penchant for creating unbearable and inedible soup.





CVG VERDICT

Nine disks might seem a little hefty for an Amiga adventure, but since most of them are taken up with sumptuous graphics, you don't really mind that much. There's hardly any disk swapping, thankfully, but you probably wouldn't notice if there was due to the fact that the adventure itself is so enchanting. Funny and challenging, this is a great way to spend a month.

OVERALL

86

SOCCER KID

AMIGA

PLATFORM

£29.99

If you think that platform games are all a load of balls, then here's the one to prove you right.



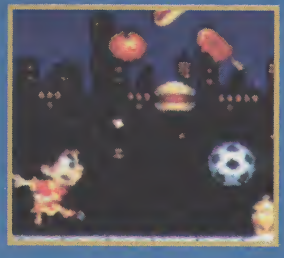


Every so often, a really polished Amiga platform game comes along that offers that little special something to make the game stand out above the rest. Soccer Kid takes the standard left to right scrolling scenario, and then adds a small football fanatic, who is never seen without his trusty football, some aliens who have stolen the world cup, and a surprising amount of ball control.

Dotted around the levels are football cards — the kind of thing Panini used to put out, which can be collected for special bonuses, and the whole thing is wrapped up with some glorious AGA graphics.

CVG VERDICT

Soccer Kid has already been a success on every other format, and the A1200 version is one of the best, so it goes without saying how good it is. Although the controls look a little perplexing, the game is very playable indeed, and you'll be hooked within minutes. If you haven't bought it yet, then get it now.



OVERALL

86

MEGADRIVE

BEAT 'EM UP

£49.95

MORTAL KOMBAT II

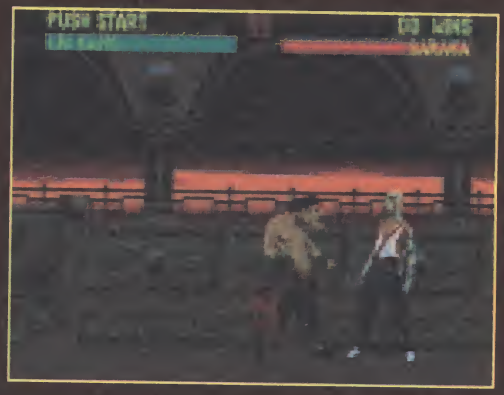
It seems that in the medium of both films and video games, sequels are rarely up to the standard set by the original. If that's true, Acclaim's Mortal Kombat II joins the cinematic line up of Aliens and T2 as a follow-up well worthy of all the hype.

Originally released into the nation's arcades towards the end of 1993, Mortal Kombat II was as large an improvement over the lack lustre original as possible. Developers Midway had dropped some of the weaker characters, expanded the number of combatants to a dozen, and made even more of the one novelty which lifted the original from obscurity: the gore! Needless to say, a conversion was always on the cards and the Megadrive coding duties have been handled by the MK veterans at Probe.

Under orders to open a path ready for a proposed invasion of Earth, the wizened warrior Shang Tsung, launched a martial arts free-for-all known as the Shaolin Tournament. His aim was to kill off Earth's greatest fighters and use a dimension gate to allow his mutant army access to the planet. Thankfully, an Earth fighter called Liu Kang defeated Tsung in a heated battle, but could only watch as the old man disappeared through a dimension gate to his home-world. Having failed to bring the Shaolin Tournament into chaos, Tsung has returned to his Outworld home to face the wrath of his leader, Shao Kahn. Begging for forgiveness, Tsung is instructed to enlist the help of five of Outworld's greatest fighters and pit them against the Kang and five of Earth's most skilled combatants — with the tournament taking place at key locations around Kahn's Outworld palace and the surrounding wastelands. With the six humans stranded in Outworld and fighting for their lives, Kahn's plan to invade Earth can proceed to plan. The humans and Outworlders are duly assembled with Tsung









rejuvenated and ordered to compete to make up for his past failure. As the tournament begins, the rules are set: best of three rounds, winner takes all — including the loser's life.

Mortal Kombat II offers the player control over any one of the 12 fighters, each of whom is equipped with a selection of special moves effected via a combination of button and joypad presses — Sub-Zero, for example, can freeze his opponents, whilst Kitana is equipped with a razor-edged fan. The usual fighting game rules apply, as the player battles against either a friend or a computer-controlled character — but it is MKII's many additions and secrets which raise it above others within the crowded genre. First and foremost, the Fatalities the victor executes at the end of the winning bout have been greatly improved, with each fighter having two at their disposal and which include Kang morphing into a dragon, ex-wrestler Jax removing limbs, or Shang Tsung proving his worth by stealing his opponent's soul. Similarly, extra comedy value is included with the addition of Babalities and Friendships which reduce the loser to a baby or offer the hand of friendship respectively — Midway's equivalent of the V-sign to those who objected to the original's gore. Finally, if 12 opponents aren't enough, three hidden characters — Jade, Smoke, and Noob Saibot — have also been included for those clever enough to find them. Now, as the digitised speech is so prone to saying: 'FIGHT!'









▲ Kitana winds up for her devastating whirling fan attack.











CVG VERDICT

The original Mortal Kombat was little more than a substandard Streetfighter clone with the addition of a few scoops of blood. This sequel, however, has been improved in every aspect, and can quite rightfully claim the beat 'em up crown. Each of the dozen fighters is equipped with a wide selection of moves, and these will take even the most adept of Kombateers ages to remember. Similarly, the assorted Fatalities, Babalities and Friendship moves require a mixture of skill and timing before they are mastered — and are extremely satisfying to watch. At the end of the day, though, it's how well a game plays that determines its success, and MKII has absolutely no worries in this department. The fighters are extremely instinctive to control, and throw, punch and kick in a variety of styles with very little effort whatsoever, easing the player into the combination moves which separate the men from the boys. The word classic is often bandied about a little too often when describing games, but it is a word that covers MKII perfectly. It's the game of the year so don't miss it.

OVERALL

97

DYNAMITE HEADDY

MEGADRIVE

PLATFORM

£44.95

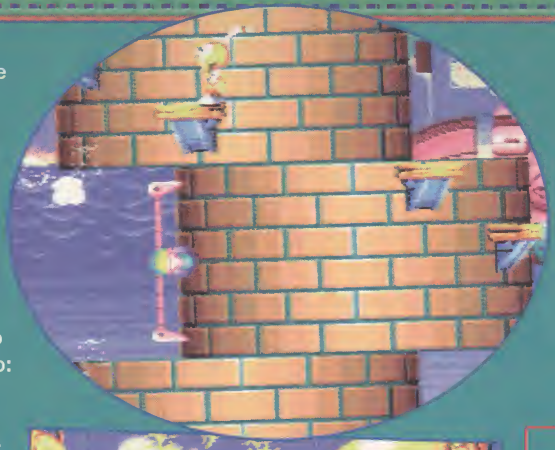
Don't lose your head is a common enough phrase — but don't expect Sega's latest hero to pay any attention! Meet Dynamite Headdy, a guy with several sensible heads on his shoulders...



About a year or so back, Megadrive owners were wowed by a revolutionary shoot 'em up called Gunstar Heroes. Using techniques previously only believed possible on the Super NES, Gunstar broke new ground for the Megadrive and made its developers, a bunch of ex-Konami lads known as Treasure, very big names indeed. Now, fresh from a skirmish in McDonalds Treasure Land, the madcap Japanese coders are up to their old tricks as they unveil their latest hero: Dynamite Headdy.

Headdy is a small toy whose one great distinction is that he can throw his head at people. Granted, that may not sound particularly useful, but when Headdy's mates are whisked away by a kidnapping cat, it's all the poor fellow has got. Dynamite Headdy is a multi-stage platformer, with the decapitating hero lobbing his head at all manner of foes and bosses as he makes his way through the colourful play area. However, not only can Headdy lob his head at bad guys, he can also swap it for a more useful noggin, thus allowing his bonce to take on a variety of effects. As such, during the course of his rescue mission, our hero will find himself sticking explosive heads, invisible heads, and fast-moving heads on his shoulders, whilst making the most of their properties against the oncoming hordes.

As you would expect from the guys behind Gunstar Heroes, Dynamite Headdy's alien cast are the weirdest bunch of miscreants you're ever likely to see. Wooden ballerinas are drafted to the side of evil, yellow submarines hound poor Headdy, and strange inflatable planes also make an appearance — and that's without mentioning the strange sub-games which appear! All this and a detachable noggin. Blimey.





▲ Head basketball anyone?





CVG VERDICT

Treasure has built a reputation around weird but eminently playable games, and Dynamite Headdy continues this. Quite easily the strangest game to emerge from their Japanese offices, Headdy draws all the best ideas from past platformers, whilst mixing them with some genius flashes of originality. The Headdy character is a dream to control, and his many heads prove extremely easy to get to grips with. But be warned — not all of them prove useful! Similarly, the bosses are every bit as impressive as those in Gunstar heroes, with large marionettes making an appearance, and the cat boss deserving special praise. Headdy is an acquired taste though, and its strange gameplay may put people off at first, but persevere and you'll reap tons of rewards from this wonderful platformer.

OVERALL

92

SONIC 3



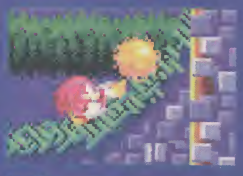
MEGADRIVE

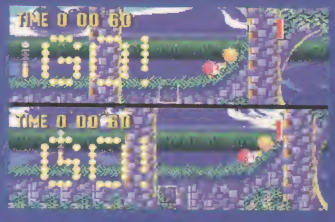
PLATFORM

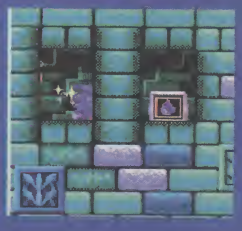
£49.95

Some people never learn, and Sonic's arch-enemy, Robotnik is living proof of this, as he makes his third comeback against Sega's blue hero.











▲ Loadsa rings and go-faster shoes.

Moebius is once again under attack from Ivo Robotnik and his Badnik creations. As ever, he has encased Sonic's woodland chums in robotic casings and is sending them across the planet to cause havoc. However, a new foe has appeared in the form of Knuckles, a pink Echidna, who steals the chaos emeralds at the start of the game. Sonic has to fend off repeated attacks from Robotnik and retrieve the crystals from his new pink enemy. Our blue chum whizzes through loop-the-loops, bum-bounces Badniks, and collects rings before a quick battle against a Robotnik boss machine at the end of each level. The game's many zones now include swings, collapsing bridges and hidden bonus levels to keep Sonic on his toes.

CVG VERDICT

Sonic 3 is the biggest and best of the trilogy, with Sega pulling out all the stops to make his latest adventure a real show stopper. Graphically, things are tighter than ever before, with more Badniks, and the largest levels of any Sonic game. However, whilst Sega have ensured this third game looks the business, they have also managed to retain the same playability that made the first Sonic so much fun in the first place. Add to this a cluster of new bonus stages, some of the best bosses the Megadrive has ever seen, and a massive game task and you're on to yet another classic offering from the guys and gals at Sega. Quite simply the best Sonic game yet — and that's saying something.

OVERALL

94

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II

MEGADRIVE

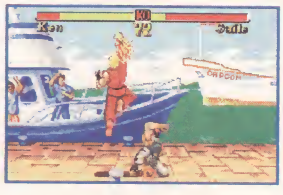
BEAT 'EM UP

£55.99

We've had the 'Championship Edition,' and a 'Turbo Edition' — just how long can the Street Fighter hype machine continue apace...









Surely this doesn't need any explaining! Street Fighter 2 has been the unrivalled success story of the last three years. Its 12 characters have since been enrolled in arcade lore, with Ryu, Ken, Chun-Li and M. Bison recognised as THE beat 'em up stars. Now, however, as Capcom busy themselves on a forthcoming Street Fighter III coin-op, Super introduces four new characters to the fray. Cammy, Fei-Long, DJ, and T. Hawk are the new competitors, and each is armed with a devastating array of kicks, punches and throws, and the obligatory special moves. Megadrive SSFII is a whopping 40MEG cart, with the extra memory used to tighten up the graphics and improve the animation . The 16 fighters battle it out against a series of backdrops in the tried and tested 'best of three' tournaments.

CVG VERDICT

This conversion of Super SFII is a classic example of 'too much too late.' You can't expect people to fork out an extra fifty-odd quid for a handful of new characters and special moves. Everything from the coin-op is present, but if you own the Championship Edition, this is pretty worthless. The new characters are well rounded worthy opponents to Ken and co, but Super SFII just isn't different enough to warrant a buy. Ardent Streetfighter fans will love it and others may want to give it a whirl to see what all the fuss is about, but the rest of us will probably opt for Acclaim's Mortal Kombat II. A nice conversion, but just not enough for the wonga asked. How's about a totally new version next time, Capcom?



OVERALL

88

NBA JAM

MEGADRIVE

SPORTS

£49.99





Boomshakalaka! Acclaim brings basketball bang up to date as their conversion of Midway's superb coin-op slams home...

With NBA basketball invading our screens every Saturday and the likes of Shaq O'Neill and Michael Jordan expanding their repartee to include rapping and assorted video games, Acclaim have seen fit to port the utterly brilliant NBA Jam coin-op to the Megadrive.

Originally a four-player game, NBA on the Megadrive is a cut down two-player job, with the player going two-on-two against the team of their choice.

However, whereas past Basketball sims have been bland affairs, NBA Jam has a 'Turbo' feature which gives players an extra burst of speed and enables some out of this world slam dunks and shots — which literally set the hoop alight! And if that isn't enough for you, NBA also features a selection of hidden characters, including a certain Bill Clinton who you may have heard of...







CVG VERDICT

Forget any preconceptions you may have about Basketball being dull — NBA Jam rewrites the rule book. The players on offer are the cream of the NBA league, and are masters of passing, three-pointers, and blocking. Anyone familiar with the original coin-op will be over the moon with this conversion as every aspect of the game is recreated in full. The digitised speech has survived intact, as have the gangly sprites and the frenetic playability — in fact, this is so close to the coin-op, all it's missing is the coin slot! Basketball may not be the most exciting sport to watch, but NBA Jam is playable enough to turn us all into budding Shaqs.

OVERALL

89

ZERO TOLERANCE

MEGADRIVE

SHOOT 'EM UP

£39.99



Id's Doom was the surprise hit of last year, and people have been quick to jump on the 3D blaster bandwagon — including Accolade with this Megadrive effort.

A top secret army base containing deadly weapons has been taken over by aliens. The base's 40 floors are inhabited by masses of the extra terrestrials and the chances of freeing the missiles from them are slim. However, there is one last hope for mankind — yep, it's you, stepping into the shoes of one of the four heroes. You must secure the base floor by floor, killing any aliens you meet.

The action is viewed in first-person perspective, with corridors scrolling past — bringing with it the scaly aliens. There are extra weapons to collect, including a laser-targeted gun, a shotgun and grenades and handy stuff like torches and a fireproof suits.

Zero Tolerance features a unique two-player game which links two Megadrives via a special cable. Two heroes can either work together and share the power-ups or you can both become devious little gits and try to snatch all the goodies for yourself whilst leaving your mate to deal with the alien menace...





CVG VERDICT

Doom is quite simply a masterpiece, and while we await the 32X conversion, Zero Tolerance will tide us over nicely. Initially, looks are disappointing, as the play area only makes up a third of the screen, but the fast-paced playability of the alien-bashing soon makes up for this. Every aspect of Zero Tolerance is well thought out, with the player picking up extra goodies, using maps to progress, and using genuine stealth to pick off the sneakier reptiles. With 40 stages between the player and the final alien boss, Zero Tolerance has lasting appeal in stacks, and, as such, is well worth a look by anyone impress-ed with Id's PC classic. It's the perfect substitute.



OVERALL

85

SUB-TERRANIA

MEGADRIVE

SHOOT'EM UP

£49.95

They say the old ones are the best, and Sega obviously thinks so as they remix the classic Gravita coin-op into a modern 90's version.



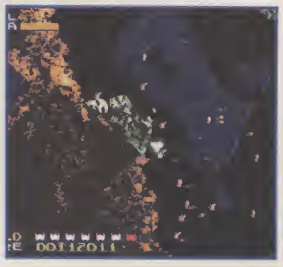




Those of you with long memories may remember a dusty old coin-op called Gravita. Using the vector graphics pioneered in the Asteroids coin-op, Gravita charged the player with guiding a small triangular spaceship into a twisting cavern and battling with the ship's inertia and limited controls in order to rescue a pod within. Sub-Terrania uses the same premise with the player guiding a slightly more detailed triangular ship, but expanding upon the mission briefs. Now, in addition to struggling with the gravity and inertia, the player must align mirrors to reflect an alien beam, destroy key bases, and avoid returned fire from the thousands of aliens inhabiting the game's many sprawling caverns. Along the way, however, a selection of handy power-ups await collection to make your task a slightly easier, but in order to get to them, particularly craggy rocks stand in the way...

CVG VERDICT

Sub-Terrania is a delightfully simple game which isn't much to look at, but is a dream to play. While control over the ship is simple enough, it takes hours before anything close to the precision needed in the later caverns is mastered. Similarly, while the controls are easy enough to pick up, the missions are straight out of tough school, and collecting objects for use later on while trying to take out gun turrets requires skill most game players haven't had to call on for years. Sub-Terrania is a superb game which delights in its many puzzles and tortuous caverns. It will be ages before most players get to the end, but it's guaranteed that it has the addictive properties needed to see them through. In these days of countless beat 'em ups and platformers, this is a welcome breath of fresh air.



OVERALL

84

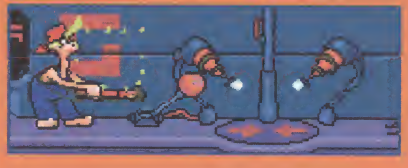
BUBBA AND STIX



MEGADRIVE

ARCADE/ADVENTURE

£44.95



Having blown us all away with Mega-CD classics such as Thunderhawk and Battlecorps, Core takes it easy with a galaxy-spanning arcade/adventure.

Part-time janitor Bubba has woken up with a nasty headache and found himself as an exhibit in an alien collector's zoo. Locked in a large cage, his only companion is what appears to be a living stick — and so begins the unlikely adventures of Bubba and Stix, Core's latest heroes. Bubba And Stix is an arcade/adventure of the old school, with the player guiding Bubba across the game's five eight-way-scrolling levels as the pair search for a way back to earth. The game's puzzles are normally solved using a mixture of brainpower and Stix. For instance, our little wooden hero is ideal for levering rocks, using as a temporary platform, or simply throwing at hostile foes — he even doubles as a snorkle at one point! Thus, using Stix's many skills, the player must work out how to make it to the teleporter at the end of each stage, whilst keeping Bubba safe from any foes.







CVG VERDICT

The arcade/adventure breed is a rare thing for the Megadrive, making Bubba And Stix a welcome release. Starting off simply enough with the player getting to grips with Stix's many uses, the game soon toughens up as the player finds Bubba stuck in a volcanic cavern or herding obtuse aliens across a sprawling spaceship. It is these puzzles which make Bubba so playable. While extremely easy to effect, certain aspects of the game require split-second timing, necessitating both brainpower and joypad dexterity from the player. The main real gripe with Bubba And Stix though, is that it occasionally seems a little slow-paced, but apart from that arcade/adventures don't come much better than this.

OVERALL

85

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS

■ MEGADRIVE
■ SPORTS
■ £39.99

Pete Sampras is the latest in a long line of licensed heroes, this time courtesy of Codemasters.

Codemasters has teamed up with Tennis wunderkind, Pete Sampras, to create what they hope will be the ultimate Tennis simulation. So, what's so different about it? For a start, Sampras is a four-player game with Codemasters using clever jiggery-pokery to add two extra joypad ports to the back of the cart, thus negating the use of a 4-player adaptor, and secondly, they've made it as user-friendly as possible. Sampras Tennis takes place on the world's greatest courts with the player selecting their chosen pro and heading off for the big prizes. The 8MEG cart, features doubles, a variety of court surfaces and more shots than a vaccination clinic — you can even play as the curly-haired wonder!





■ CVG VERDICT

Pete Sampras Tennis is quite simply the most playable game of its kind, with realistic shots, plenty of lobs, smashes and serves, and a series of tournaments. Players tour the world, play opponents with different styles, and even argue with the umpire. Codemasters has tried to make it as instinctive to play as the real thing — and they've succeeded. Pete Sampras Tennis is the current number one seed in video games and well worth a bash.

OVERALL
84

JUNGLE BOOK

■ MEGADRIVE
■ PLATFORM
■ £44.99

Aladdin proved that Virgin was the king of the platform swingers, but will its second Disney licence make them the Jungle VIPs?

With a development time to rival that of most NASA spacecraft, The Jungle Book finally swings onto the Megadrive, bringing the likes of Mowgli, Baloo and Shere Kahn with it. The player guides Mowgli through the cartoon-esque levels as our hero collects a selection of jewels before moving on. Fruit-throwing monkeys, venomous snakes and countless bosses are out to stop poor Mowgli who must defend himself by throwing bananas at the assorted foes. In all, Jungle Book comprises 12 stages, with the game ending when Mowgli defeats the supposed 'King Of The Beasts', Shere Kahn the tiger.





■ CVG VERDICT

Although The Jungle Book is a polished game, anyone familiar with Aladdin — and indeed Cool Spot and Mick and Mack — may come away feeling cheated because of the similarity between them all. That said, Jungle is still an eminently playable platformer — if a little easy — and the 12 levels are crammed with dozens of recognisable Disney greats. Older players will whizz through it, but definitely one for the younger Megadrive user.

OVERALL
80

STREETS OF RAGE 3

■ MEGADRIVE
■ BEAT 'EM UP
■ £49.95

You can judge a beat 'em up by the names of the characters within. Any game with heroes called Blaze and Axel deserves a look...

Originally designed as a rival to Nintendo's Final Fight, Streets Of Rage has outlasted the Capcom classic, and this sequel sees surviving heroes, Blaze and Axel, joined by two new members, Zan and Sammy. The scenario is another tale of good vs evil, with the one or two players selecting a hero then wandering the streets, offing everyone in sight. All the usual features are present, with food and extra weapons to pick up, and bosses appearing at the end of every stage. However, our fighting foursome are now equipped with more moves than ever before — with Zan boasting some very impressive extending arms!





■ CVG VERDICT

Streets Of Rage 3 retains the walk and thump format of the past two, but the sprites are beefier, the missions larger, and there'ĺ even a slight puzzle element to the later stages. SOR3 keeps the player on their toes with little surprises and twists on tried and tested themes — the last boss, for example, isn't all he seems. SOR3 is quite easily the best of the genre, but even so it's about time that Blaze and co retired whilst at the top.

OVERALL
82

PRINCE OF PERSIA

MEGADRIVE

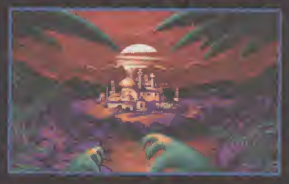
PLATFORM

£39.95

Having appeared on virtually every format known to man, PoP finally settles on the Megadrive — do we need another hero?

After hitting almost every format going, Prince Of Persia finally ends up on the Megadrive. An evil Jaffar has kidnapped a beautiful Princess with the aim of using her as ransom in his bid to seize control of a distant city. Holing himself up in a labyrinthian building, he has given the local authorities an hour in which to meet his proposals or seal her doom. As one last hope, a brave Prince goes for a final rescue attempt, with only his trusty sword and agility to save him. Scimitar-wielding guards, razor-sharp gates, and collapsing floors are just some of the dangers ahead, and the player must tackle each of the game's 14 levels within the one real-time hour given — no easy task.







CVG VERDICT

In these days of Another Worlds and Flashbacks PoP is starting to look dated. Playability-wise it's fine. The hour given in which to complete the game is testing and some of the puzzles and switch layouts require perfect timing and positioning to solve. The swordplay within the game is equally skillful, with carefully-timed lunges and parries the order of the day. It's a shame it took Domark so long to bring PoP to the Megadrive because it's just not enough to rival the new breed.

OVERALL

84

MUTANT LEAGUE HOCKEY

MEGADRIVE

SPORTS

£44.99

We've had Mutant League Football and now Hockey. When are EA going to get around to Mutant League Netball?

EA has replaced the psychotic giants who usually play ice hockey with a series of genetically-engineered mutants who slug it out with whatever comes to hand. Using the same bird's-eye view as seen in NHLPA, MLH opts for a scarred pitch onto which skate a series of mutants ready for a rumble. Using the joypad buttons to hit both the puck and anyone in range, the game erupts into an explosion of shattered bodies, and players falling into the aforementioned holes! All the usual substitutes, pep talks, and fight scenes are present, but now much gorier — and far more satisfying!







CVG VERDICT

The comedy value in MLH — opponents falling through ice or dissolving into dust — initially makes it fun to play but once the novelty wears off it falls to the gameplay to save it, which it just cannot pull off like its more serious NHLPA cousin. The holes in the ice make for a more frustrating game than one requiring skill and, after a while, you're left wishing you'd opted for the officially-licensed hockey game rather than this average horror variant.

OVERALL

80

SKITCHIN

MEGADRIVE

RACE GAME

£44.95

Hanging on to the back of a moving car comes under the label of 'don't try this at home, kids.' But it hasn't stopped EA jumping onto a passing bandwagon.

Take a dollop of Road Rash, nick its 3D perspective, add some mad rollerskaters and you've go the basis for Skitchin. This sport is apparently popular in the US and involves skaters racing to a checkpoint by hitching rides on the back of passing cars. EA's game recreates this dangerous pastime with the player scooting along the 3D road, hanging onto cars, punching other racers out of the way, and leaping over ramps. Don't get hit by cars, and survive any roadworks to the bitter end.







CVG VERDICT

Skitchin is a logical extension of the Rash game engine, and play requires more skill than riding that bike whilst swinging a chain ever did. Moving from car to car requires good timing and perfect positioning, and couple this with fending off rival skaters and you have a real battle on your hands. However, once car-jacking is mastered, repetition is soon the order of the day and not even taking three or four opponents on at a time can save Skitchin from tedium.

OVERALL

82

SUPER METROID

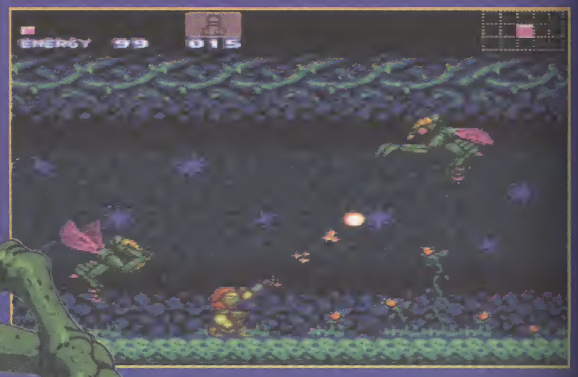
■ SNES
■ PLATFORM
■ £64.99

Nintendo's first 24MEG cart, and everyone's going loopy about it. Here's why.

We are going on a journey back in time. Back... back... back... back to when the NES was the best console money could buy (yes, that far back), and back to a time where the hottest releases were Super Mario Bros II, Bubble Bobble, and numerous Track 'n' Field clones. In fact, so far back Take That were probably hassling their mums for money for The Beano, and computer game mags were starting to hear rumours about a little Nintendo handheld. It was around this time that Nintendo of Japan unveiled a new platform for the little 8-Bit wonder — Metroid. A mixture of Turrican and Acclaim's Alien 3 platformer, Metroid was way ahead of its time, and introduced a feisty female warrior called Samus who jumped, shot and wreaked havoc through Metroid and the many sequels that followed on both the NES and Game Boy. Now, however, she has been given a whopping 24MEG cart to fill with a game which is an amalgamation of the best parts of the original games. And, by 'eck, it's biggie.

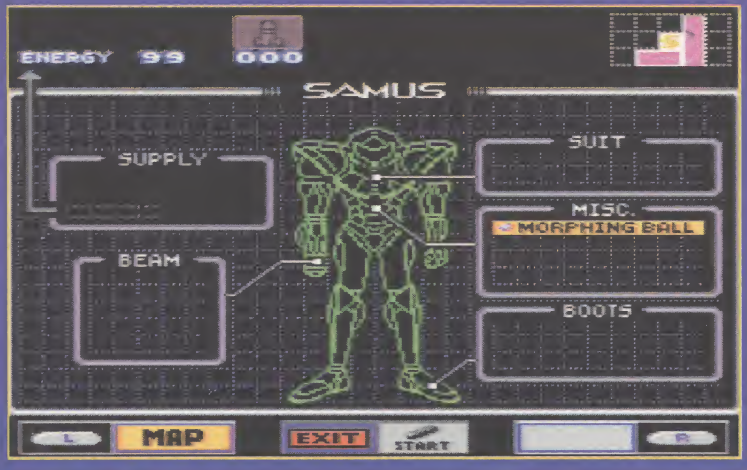
Super Metroid is a multi-stage, eight-way-scrolling affair, with Samus picking her way across the scrolling stages whilst blasting the many aliens she meets. It's basically a game of progression, which sets the player special tasks which must be completed in order.

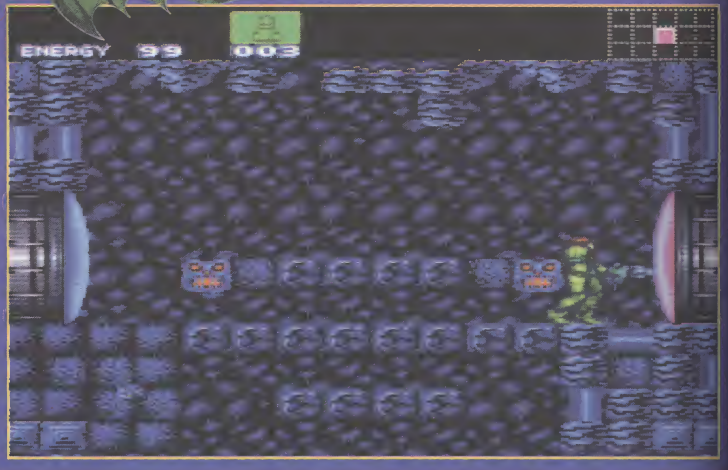
However, whilst the tasks seem easy enough to start with, they soon get extremely devious with traps sapping our heroine's valuable





▲ There be dragons in them there 'ills and mighty dangerous ones at that so watch your back, Samus.





energy, doors locking her in rooms with loads of baddies, and huge bosses guarding much-needed exits. The only way to survive such hazards is by grabbing as many of the power-ups you find lying about, and adding them to Samus' plentiful inventory.

In addition to the usual health and weapon power-ups platform heroes are used to, Samus can also get to grips with a handy grappling hook for swinging across large chasms, and use a morphing ball to change into a tiny spinning ball which proves useful for getting through tiny gaps. Similarly, speed is of the essence and any Samus who hangs about is destined to be a dead Samus.

Nintendo have pulled out all the stops to ensure Super Metroid lives up to the standards set by its 8-Bit predecessors, and in updating the game for the Super NES, you can expect loads of Mode 7 trickery, bosses NES owners can only dream of, and graphical effects galore. However, before you get to sample such delights, a number of seemingly mundane tasks must be completed, including rescuing Metroid lava from a crumbling building before finding yourself seemingly trapped in a locked room. From here, things get rapidly more complex with the player destroying the aforesaid bosses in order to place a crystal within the many orifices within a golden statue. When all the crystals are replaced, the statue crumbles away to dust only to reveal a new set of tasks — yes it's that big. Thankfully, though, Nintendo's new policy of incorporating a battery back-up into their larger carts has been carried through to Super Metroid, and Samus can save her current position using one of the telepods which dot the game. However, only three positions can be stored, so don't get greedy.

The game ends when Samus has completed all the tasks set, but don't expect to get there in a hurry. It could be a long night.



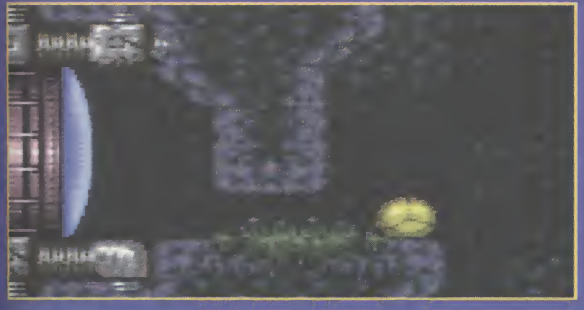


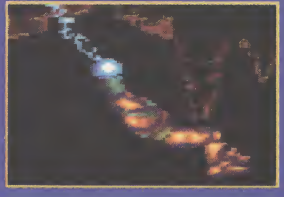














CVG VERDICT

Playing Super Metroid is a disappointing feeling at first. For a 24MEG cart, the game seems dull and uninteresting, with Samus wandering around a number of locations performing trivial and seemingly pointless tasks. Then, all of a sudden, a door slams shut, loads of bug-eyed monsters flood in and it's a battle to the death. Followed by another. And another. And so on. However, so gentle is the game's learning curve that you barely notice how engrossed you are until you look at the clock and it's nearly midnight! Super Metroid is a very deceptive game. Its gameplay draws you in rather than its looks and the missions flow into each other so smoothly that game seems flawless. It would be really easy to fill the following pages with praise on Super Metroid's many plus points. It plays well, looks nice in an odd kind of way, and is extremely user-friendly with loads of save options and features. However, space is limited o let's just leave it at saying that Super Metroid is the largest, best value for money game available for the Super NES. Needless to say, every home should have one.

OVERALL

91

▼ OH NO! I forgot to wear my parachute. Aieeeeeeeee!

▼ Even the minor baddies that Samus encounters on this mammoth quest are enough to test the skills of even the most hardened gamers.

■ SNES
■ DRIVING
■ £59.95

STUNT RACE FX



Pitted against Sega's Virtua Racing in the cart race of the year, Nintendo's equivalent to Damon Hill revs up its powerful FX engine.

The FX chip has received more hype than most games in its relatively short life, and Stunt Race FX was Nintendo's chance to prove that Starwing wasn't just a fluke one-off. Written by Jez San and his Argonaut team under the watchful eye of Mario creator, Shigeru Miyamoto, Stunt Race FX gives the player control over a number polygon-based vehicles as they roar around a series of timed courses. Or there's a split-screen mode for two-player japery. Stunt Race FX's many vehicles include motorbikes, buggies, and an impressive juggernaut with abysmal cornering skills.

The trials pit the player against a series of similar vehicles as they zoom around the twisty circuits, going through tunnels, and avoiding the many hazards. However, whereas Sega opted for the serious racer with Virtua, Stunt Race FX's cars roll all over the place, fall to bits only to reassemble themselves, and have distinct personalities — not to mention faces!

In all, 15 such courses stand between the player and victory with a further five testing the skills of anyone foolish enough to try to master the aforementioned juggernaut. However, an element of strategy is needed in that some of the courses are water-logged and, as such require something like the four-wheeled vehicle to make it through with a decent time, whereas the smaller coupe will need a number of boosters to get through.









■ CVG VERDICT

Wiping aside Sega's Virtua Racing with ease, Stunt Race FX combines arcade-perfect racing with humour in a match made in heaven. At first, the crude graphics don't look that hot, but once things start speeding up and the cars start falling to bits and putting themselves together any early worries are soon evaporated. Another reason Stunt Race succeeds is that it is so eminently playable. The controls are beautifully simple yet totally comprehensive, and controlling the many vehicles is a doddle to master. Equally impressive are the rival vehicles who display varying degrees of intelligence — and some are so stupid they move if you beep your horn at them! A completely stunning game, and more proof that the FX chip is more than just a novelty. Here, it is shown in all its glory creating a mixture of vectors and bitmapped backdrops previously thought impossible.

OVERALL ■

91

Stunt Race FX features spectacular crashes where the cars disintegrate then magically reassemble.

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

■ SNES
■ SPORTS
■ £44.95

The greatest soccer game of all time hits the Super NES and then some!

EA's FIFA is widely acknowledged as the greatest footy game of all time. Its unique perspective and comprehensive moves and tactics saw it shoot to the top of the Megadrive charts and stay there for months. The Super NES game has since appeared under the wing of Ocean, and during the conversion process several enhancements have been made. Super NES FIFA offers a better passing system than before, aftertouch on long shots, and more on the tactics side. Additionally, the graphics and sound win over those of the Sega version, with the player sprites not so blocky and pitch echoing to a number of footy crowds noises including a rather smart 'oooh' when a shot goes wide.







■ CVG VERDICT

The playability of this conversion has been tweaked so the action flows more smoothly than the Megadrive game, and the number of shots and passes has been upped. There are loads of presentation and tactic screens and in-game options. Super NES owners have been without a decent soccer game since the machine came to Britain, this, however, changes all that and stands proud at the top of the footy sim league table.

OVERALL
90

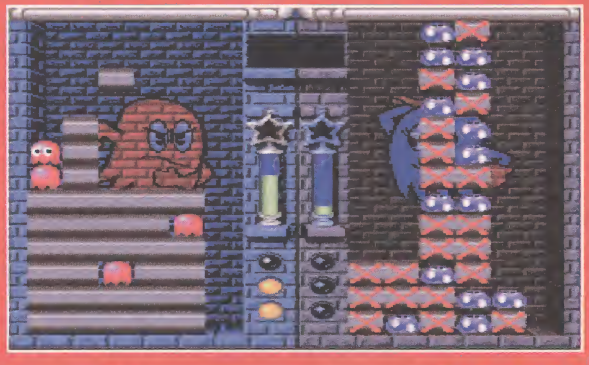
PAC ATTACK

■ SNES
■ PUZZLE GAME
■ £39.95

It's the strangest cross-breed since 'Piranha II: Flying Killers', as Namco's pill-gobbling PacMan meets Tetris.

As old as time itself, PacMan has graduated from appearing on TV-AM, Game and Watches, countless duvet covers and lunchboxes, and has taken a bit of a breather by appearing in this rather odd-looking 8MEG puzzle game. Imagine Tetris with the usual twisted blocks dropping from the top of the screen, but with Inky, Binky and the other ghosts trapped within them. As they settle, the aim of Pac Attack is to line the ghosts up so that, when the Pac icon drops on to the screen, he can then move from left to right (complete with wacka-wacka sound effect), eating any spectres in his path. Simple! However, as the game progresses, the ghosts get rarer and the blocks tumble faster, so make sure that every Pac counts!







■ CVG VERDICT

Simplicity in a game can can either create a limited game with little lasting appeal, or make it so addictive it doesn't matter. Pac Attack is somewhere between the two, with the Tetris-style gameplay and innovative use of the Pac licence drawing the player in and the simplicity of the puzzles keeping them there. The more the game speeds up the more playable it gets, but after a while this isn't enough to warrant prolonged playing. Good for the occasional game, Pac Attack won't win any awards for its longevity.

OVERALL
87

R-TYPE 3

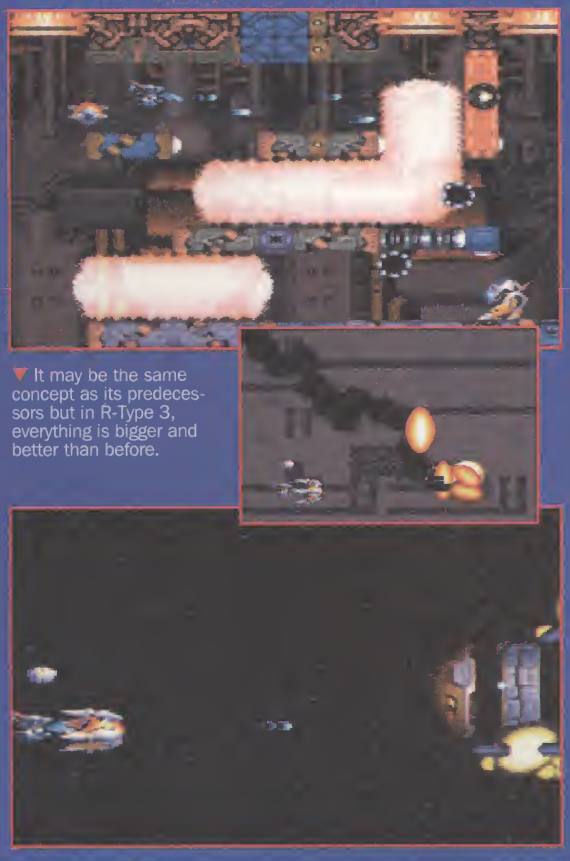
SNES

SHOOT 'EM UP

£59.99

The arcade classic returns with an all-new complement of weapons and aliens. Get ready for blast off...

The eternally-evil Bydo empire is back for another crack at galactic domination. Once again the R-Type fighter is dusted off, launched into space with minimal weaponry and left to fend for itself against whatever the Bydo people launch at it. Yep, we're in traditional blaster zone again, as the R-Type ships meanders through the horizontally-scrolling play area picking off aliens with its front-mounted laser and trusty beam device. As with past R-Type games, extra weaponry can be found in he shape of coloured icons, and these endow the ship with bouncy lasers, wall-hugging bombs, and a handy force device to protect the front of the ship. In all, there are five long worlds awaiting deBydoing, and each is presided over by a larger 'Boss' who requires a vast number of hits before giving up the ghost.



▼ It may be the same concept as its predecessors but in R-Type 3, everything is bigger and better than before.

CVG VERDICT

With R-Type 3, Irem has pushed the Super NES to its limits to include Mode 7 sections, bosses which pan in and out of the screen, and more aliens on screen than any other blaster. This is a shoot 'em up fan's dream, with plenty to blast sections requiring pixel-perfect precision, and genuine skill. Shoot 'em ups have deviated into a number of different strands recently, but R-Type is as traditional as they get and all the better for it.

OVERALL

88

NBA JAM

SNES

SPORTS

£49.95

Acclaim are cock-a-hoop as they bring Basketball slamming into the 90s.

The surprise coin-op hit of last year, NBA Jam hits the Super NES in a near arcade-perfect conversion. Boasting top players from the NBA league pitted against each other in a series of two-on-two matches, there's more to NBA than fumbling for a three-pointer from the other end of the court. In order to speed up what is perceived as a dull sport, NBA Jam features special 'Turbo' bars which, when used, prompt the player currently holding the ball to score an unbelievably good shot, run faster than is feasibly possible, or block even the biggest attacker. However, as is always the case, the use of these is limited and should only be used in emergencies. Oh, and in keeping in with the coin-op, programmers Iguana have even included the many hidden players for you to find.



▼ Hmmm, interesting screenshots R Us — if you like pictures of crowds watching the fast-paced action of this topper NBA Jam conversion, that is.

CVG VERDICT

Acclaim's Super NES conversion of NBA Jam handles the towering coin-op sprites with ease and ensures they move at a suitably fast pace. The assorted turbo moves are easy to pull off and add an extra 'zip' to what is already a very playable sim. Of all the basketball games released to date, NBA Jam is the only one that makes you want to try the real thing. It's fast, instinctive to control, and brilliant to look at — everything such a sim should be.

OVERALL

88

VORTEX

SNES

SHOOT'EM UP

£49.95

Remember those Transformer toys of a few years back? Sony do...

Following Starwing and Stunt Race FX, the third game to use Argonaut's vector-enhancing FX chip finally arrives. The world is under threat from an alien race which has stolen five pieces of a reactor core and spread them across the seven planets they currently control. In order to return the segments to their rightful owner, you've been given a hi-tech walker suit which can morph into four different forms. Initially, the designer outfit resembles a robot, but you can change into a car, a tank or a jet — each of which have varying strengths and weaknesses. With the morphing suit under control, Vortex is revealed to be a fast-paced blaster with the enemy legions trundling across the assorted space and planet-based vector landscapes in an attempt to blow the player into oblivion and thwart your plans of liberation.





▲ You have to be pixel-precision perfect to get those baddies but my it's a satisfying feeling once you've mastered the controls.

CVG VERDICT

Vortex is certainly the best-looking game to feature the FX chip. The morphing robot is superb and, far from being a cheap graphical thrill, is absolutely essential to the gameplay. First-time players may be left befuddled by the precise controls, but constant practice reveals it to be the perfect complement to the fast blasting action. Snapping up Vortex was the best thing Sony could have done. Superb.

OVERALL

89

MORTAL KOMBAT II

SNES

BEAT'EM UP

£49.95

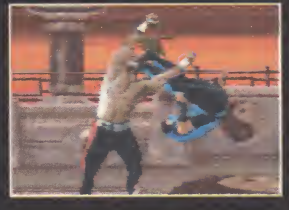
The gap between coins and the following conversions is getting ever smaller. Acclaim is determined to close it completely, though — as shown with MKII.



▲ Mileena dishes the death with her fatal fan attack.







You know the story by now. Shang Tsung failed to invade Earth, so his ruler, Shao Kahn, organises another tournament, drags 11 Outworld and Earth people across time for it, and forces Tsung to join in. Set across a number of Outworld locations — including the wasteland, Kahn's palace, and the 'Living Forest' — the combatants are left to battle it out to see who is worthy of challenging Kahn himself. All the arcade game's Fatalities, Babalities, and Friendships have been included, as have the three hidden characters, the 'Toasty!' gonk, and anything else you care to mention. Whilst the Megadrive version was coded by Probe, though, this Super NES conversion was written by Sculptured Software over in the US of A, and makes extra use of the Nintendo machine's enhanced graphic capabilities for large sprites, more detailed backdrops, and the occasional use of Mode 7 for the Pit Fatalities.

CVG VERDICT

Graphically this IS the arcade game, with the characters towering above those of any other beat 'em up, and the backdrops recreated perfectly. It also plays exactly like the coin-op, with all the moves incorporated and — gasp, horror! — all the blood left intact this time! Every aspect has been left intact and all the moves of the V3.1 version have been ported across. Beat 'em ups don't come any better than this.

OVERALL

96

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II

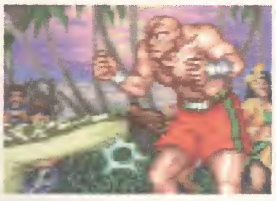
SNES

BEAT 'EM UP

£IMPORT

The saga continues with the addition of three men and a little lady.





▼ DJ is one of the four newcomers and as Honda discovers, he packs one hell of a punch.



Capcom's Super NES conversion of the SSFII is of the original coin-op and not the recently-released Turbo Edition, and contains the original 12 characters and four new heroes. Cammy originates from England (hence Kylie playing her in the film!?), DJ is a Jamaican, T. Hawk an Indian, and Fei-Long is an entrant from Hong Kong. As with the original, SSFII draws them all together with the intention of one fighter beating the rest to become the 'World Warrior.' The extras don't end with the new characters, though, as Capcom have taken the chance to tighten up the weaker fighters (Honda, for example), to ensure the fights are a little more balanced than before.

CVG VERDICT

SSFII is an excellent conversion of the arcade machine, with all the moves, graphics and sound of the coin-op. However, the whole Street Fighter concept is starting to look a little dated. The graphics have been tightened up, but compared to MKII's, now look too comical and some of the sampled sounds are barely recognisable. Still, if you're a major fan of the coin-op SSFII will probably satisfy those arcade cravings.

OVERALL

90

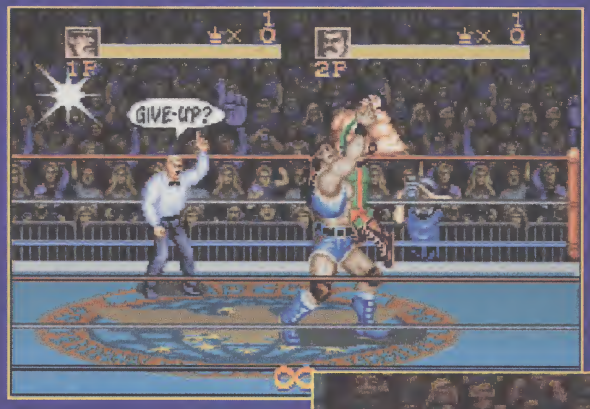
MUSCLE BOMBER

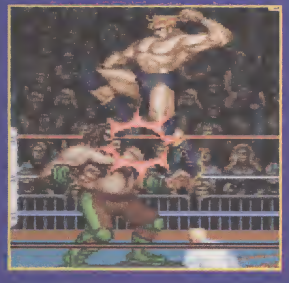
SNES

BEAT 'EM UP

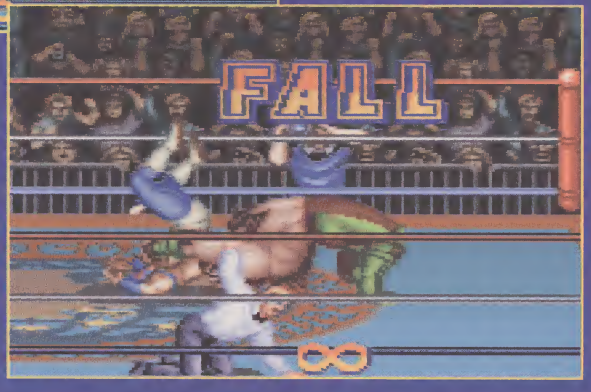
£IMPORT

Gone are the days of Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks — get ready to wrestle Capcom style!





▼ These guys will bend over backwards for their opponents — not usually by choice though!



With Street Fighter and Final Fight placing them firmly at the top of the beat 'em up league for as long as anyone can remember, Capcom have now turned their attentions to the life of the grunting 'n' groaning wrestling circuit. You take control of some of the greatest wrestlers in Capcomland (including Mike Haggar from Final Fight), in either one-on-one bouts or tag team matches. Every wrestler is equipped with odd and visually impressive moves, ranging from the usual piledrivers and slams to some really odd throws — and where would a Capcom game be without a handful of special moves! Muscle Bomber is virtually identical to its arcade parent, with the ring spanning three screens and some of the largest sprites to grace the Super NES.

CVG VERDICT

Past attempts at recreating wrestling as a video game have been dull affairs with few moves and dreary sprites. Muscle Bomber, has all the glitz and throws of a WWF match and outdoes Acclaim's officially-endorsed games for over-the-top characters! The moves are easy to pull off, and some of them are incredible to watch. Muscle Bomber is the perfect cure for anyone sick of basic one-on-one beat 'em ups.

OVERALL

89

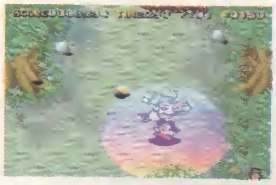
KIKIKAIKAI 2

SNES

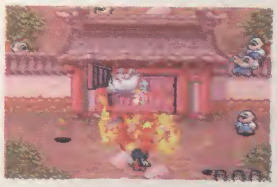
SHOOT 'EM UP

£IMPORT

Now there's something you don't see every-day: a three-way-firing Racoon...







The original Kikikaikai was an unusual blaster starring a little girl and her Racoon mate. Together, they passed through numerous scrolling stages, blasting things and going shopping. This sequel offers more of the same, but now boasts better graphics, more characters to select, a larger play area, and more shops! It also features a new slant on the one-player mode, with the player controlling both characters at once, but using the slave sprite as a weapon to bash the enemy with. A slight puzzle edge has also been added, too, with keys needed to progress through certain areas, and special objects needed to combat the game's many bosses.

CVG VERDICT

Whilst not offering a great deal over the original, Kikikaikai II is a superb shoot 'em up which uses cute graphics throughout, but still makes them appear menacing! There's always plenty to find, buy and shoot and this keeps the action trundling along very nicely. The one thing stopping Kikikaikai being an unwarranted classic is that the screen often slows down when there's a lot going on, but if you can tolerate that you'll love this.

OVERALL

84

DRAGON

SNES

BEAT 'EM UP

£49.95

The official game of the film of the life of the films and fights of Bruce Lee. Phew!







Bruce Lee is the name immediately associated with martial arts genius. He practically invented the action film with titles such as Enter The Dragon and The Big Boss. Virgin's game follow's Lee's life as recounted in the film, and starts with Bruce getting into a scrap in Hong Kong, moving to the US where more fights follow, and finally fighting against a demon who plagued his dreams throughout childhood. Between one and three players battle against a succession of key enemies — with weapons added to the fray for competent fighting.

CVG VERDICT

As a one-player game, Dragon offers a variety of intelligent foes, including cleaver-wielding chefs and the guy with the big hair from Enter The Dragon. In addition to the straight fighting, Bruce is given a 'Chi' bar which gives him extra fighting skills and weapons when full. The main test of a beat 'em up is how fast and instinctive it is, and Virgin has done the great man proud here. No rival to MKII's crown, but Dragon is still a smart beat 'em up.

OVERALL

84

METAL MARINES

SNES

STRATEGY

£49.99

When two tribes go to war, one is all that you can score...







Blimey, this is a rarity. Strategy games on the Super NES are rarer than Dodo poop, so should be nabbed as soon as possible if you're sick of the plethora of platformers clogging up your local software emporium. Metal Marines is set in the near future, with the player playing general over their army of bulky robots. Among your duties are the nuking of enemy bases, the repairing of yours after retaliating battles, and the overall conquest of the game map. However you are never told where the enemy lurk so, as with the old paper-based classic Battleships, you've got to pinpoint your enemy with a series of lucky strikes before locating their whereabouts and blowing them into next week.

CVG VERDICT

Metal Marines marries strategy gameplay with Ramparts-style arcade bits, and the mixture works well. The game is like a complex version of Battleships with the player loosing off rounds in search of the enemy base, whilst the foes are doing the same. Granted, it is nothing Napoleon would have a problem with and the strategic bits are minimal, but it's playable. And that's what counts.

OVERALL

86

SUPER TROLL ISLAND

SNES
PLATFORM
£49.99

In this new platformer you guide a mop-topped weirdo around. It's like the CVG Staff Writers at lunch time...

Ever been into a card shop and, whilst desperately trying to find a card that isn't too smutty for your Nan, seen those Troll figures? The ones with bushy hair and pug noses. Well, Gametek reckons their so popular they've given them their own game. Super Troll Island is reminiscent of the old Amidar coin-op, with the player guiding the troll up and down ladders and across ledges as they attempt to add colour to the game's drab backdrop. With every footstep, the Troll leaves a coloured trail behind and if all four walls are linked, the backdrop is filled. As can be expected, though, there are nasties out to stop our plastic-faced hero.



▼ Collect the purple fruit for extra points and a gut-busting nosh-up.



CVG VERDICT

One of the brightest and jolliest games to appear for the Super NES, Super Troll Island is obviously aimed at the younger gamer. Its runaround gameplay is never going to win any awards for innovation, but it still manages to be fun and its gentle learning curve is ideally suited for the younger gamer. The levels are nice and small, keeping the player busy at all times, and the Troll is simple to control and responds quickly to the joypad moves.

OVERALL

83

SONIC BLASTMAN 2

SNES
BEAT 'EM UP
£IMPORT

One of arcade-dom's forgotten heroes refuses to stay down...

The Sonic Blastman coin-op was an odd affair which involved pulling on a boxing glove and whacking a padded target. The basic plot was, as the yellow-caped Blastman, to stop the world using just your punching skills. A series of big creatures, trucks and planets were then thrown at you, and you had to punch them out! For the Super NES game, though, the coders opted for a traditional Final Fight-style beat 'em up with Blastman taking all comers across a series of scrolling stages. It's more of the same for this sequel, but Blastman now has more moves to contend with the more plentiful bad guys and tougher end-of-stage bosses.



▼ Gives a whole new meaning to the phrase seeing stars.



CVG VERDICT

With so many Final Fight clones out for the Super NES, newcomers have to be very special to stand a chance. Sonic Blastman has added dozens of special moves to keep things interesting and, coupled with the novelty values of the characters, it works brilliantly. The fight sequences are real 'Kapow' jobs and the game piles loads of sprites on screen at once to ensure boredom doesn't set in. A classy game, and one which shines in a crowded genre.

OVERALL

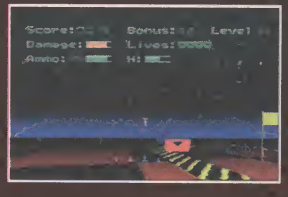
83

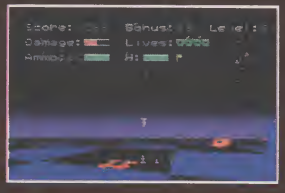
SPECTRE

SNES
SHOOT 'EM UP
£44.95

Gametek clamber into their tanks to open fire on the shoot 'em up fraternity.

Spectre started life as an Apple Mac game and was created to make the most of the Mac's multi-link. Seated within your tank, the aim of the game was to find flags or, in the multi-player mode, blow your mates to smithereens. Gametek's Super NES version features much the same tasks, but the dull graphics of the Mac version have been replaced by solid polygon tanks and shaded horizons.







CVG VERDICT

On the Mac, Spectre is just a handy diversion used when people haven't got any work to do. This Super NES version tries to make it as a fully-fledged blaster and stumbles due to its lack of depth. Gametek has gone to town on the appearance and added a few features, but the novelty still wears off fairly quickly. It is immediately playable and fast-moving, but those with limited cash can find much better investments.

There are a few extras, the tanks can now jump to avoid being hit, the two-player mode ues a split-screen mode, and it runs a little faster — as you would expect from a console version.

OVERALL

84

GAME BOY

PLATFORM

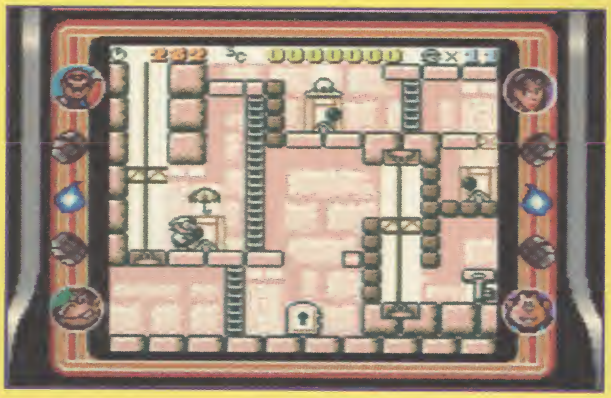
£29.99

DONKEY KONG '94

Nintendo go back to their roots for the perfect game to launch their Super Game Boy.

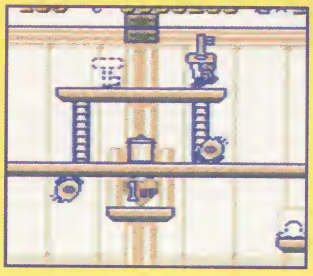


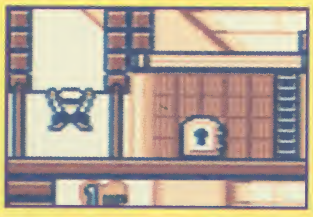
Whenever Nintendo launch a new machine, you can guarantee that their plucky Brooklyn plumber, Mario, will appear for it almost immediately. This pattern now continues as Nintendo unveil their Super Game Boy plug-in, which allows Super NES owners to play handheld carts on their machines. However, rather than taking the starring role, Donkey Kong '94 gives the leading role to the titular ape who, as in his first appearance eight years back, has kidnapped the Princess and is holding her hostage.





As Mario, the player must climb to the top of a series of platform-laden stages whilst simultaneously avoiding anything the primate lob at him. Anyone familiar with the old four-stage coin-op will be at home as Donkey Kong '94 begins, as Nintendo have converted the coin-op lock, stock and barrel. However, no sooner has Mario reached the Princess and Kong is suffering from a sore head, then a strange twist to the plot is added and the game opens up into a massively-expanded platformer. A map appears, and Mario is drawn into a series of tricky screens where Kong's traps get nastier and nastier. As the game progresses, the path to Kong is cluttered with the addition of extra conveyor belts, objects to be collected, and hammers to smash baddies with — all objects seen in the aging coin-op, but now rearranged for a 90s remix! Past Kong games also get a look in, too, with jungle scenes lifted from Nintendo's old Donkey 2 and Donkey Kong Jnr coin-ops forming the backdrop to later levels. Mario's travels bring him into contact with the mad monkey twice every level, but only when the final stage of the map is reached does the confrontation get really personal.



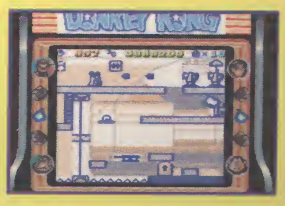






CVG VERDICT

Initially, launching the Super Game Boy with a game like Donkey Kong '94 sounded a bit daft. After all, who wants to buy a new machine and get an eight year-old game for it? That said, Nintendo have expanded the Kong engine in every direction imaginable and, in the process, created a game so playable it's up there with the Mario series for sheer addiction. Graphically, everything is brilliant with small but detailed sprites legging it around similarly well-drawn backdrops — and the extra colour gained by running it through the Super Game Boy shows the new machine off perfectly. This is an easy contender for 'Best game Boy Game Ever', and shows Nintendo are still king when it comes to platform games.



OVERALL

90

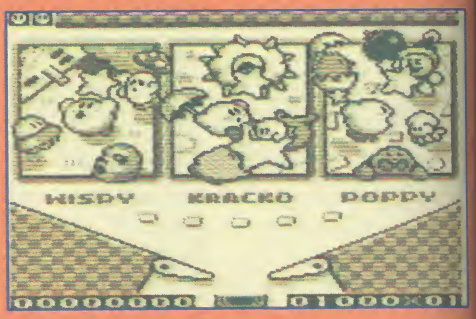
KIRBY'S PINBALL LAND

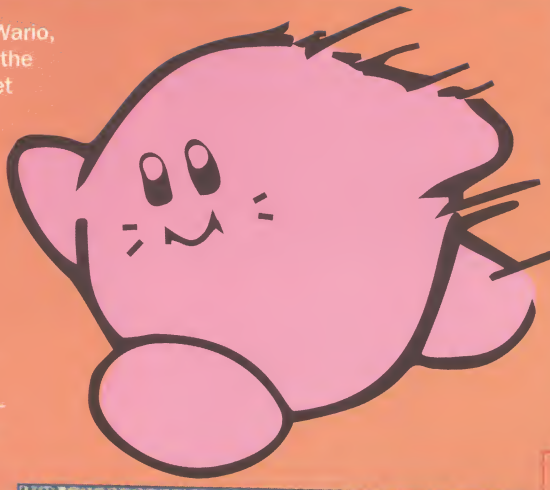
■ GAME BOY
■ PINBALL
■ £24.99

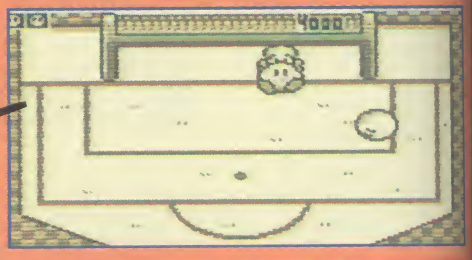
He's pink, fat and full of wind it's Nintendo's Kirby back for a bottom-bursting bout of bouncing on the baby green screen.



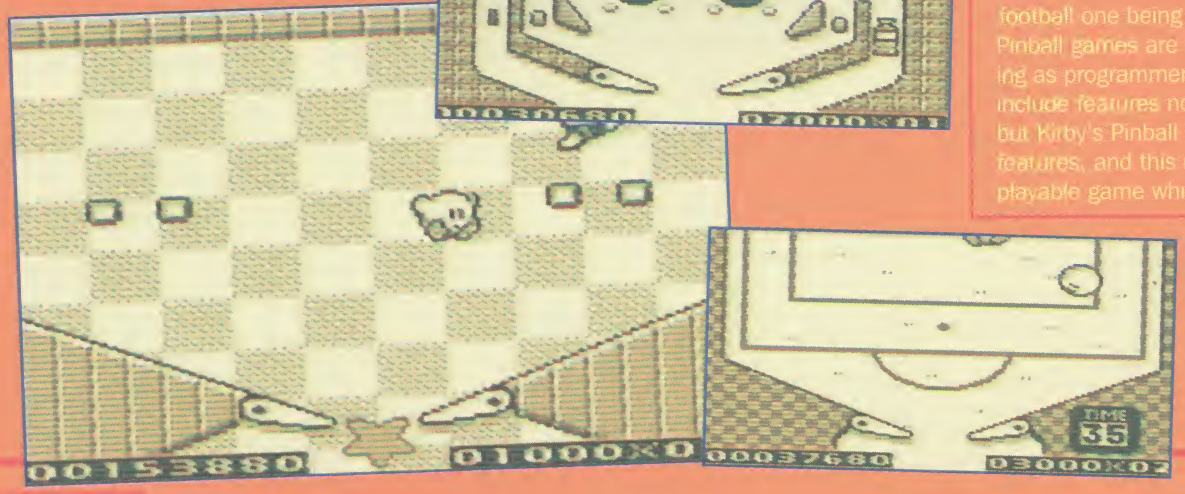
Nintendo's game hero machine has been in overdrive of late, giving a starring role to Wario, updating Samus for the 90s, and giving us the cutest bag of wind you're ever likely to meet — Kirby! Originally appearing in Kirby's Dreamland late in 1992, Kirby has now found himself stuck in a huge pinball machine with himself acting as the ball! In order to help our poor windbag hero, you are invited to get to grips with the pinball table's flippers and send our hero spinning to victory by attaining as high a score as possible and opening gateways to later stages. In all, the strange table spans three massive worlds — Wispy, Kracko, and Poppy — each of which contains hazards and monsters which reflect their graphical theme. As well as the customary pinball scenes, Kirby's Pinball Land is full of little bonus stages and hidden goodies. Most notable of these is a rather smart soccer sub-game, with a goal at the top of the screen guarded by a squid 'keeper. Using the flippers to propel Kirby upscreen, the basic aim is to score as many goals as possible to earn loads of extra points. Another neat idea is the slight puzzle element the game offers, where a block must be hit a number of times before allowing access to one of the game's bosses. Yep, and you've guessed it, on facing the almighty boss creature, the flippers are used to bounce Kirby off his body until the big, bad guy is killed.











■ CVG VERDICT

Casting a great big windbag like Kirby as the ball in a pinball game is inspired thinking, and it is the novel touches like this that make Kirby's Pinball Land so refreshing. The tables are brilliantly designed and incorporate ideas which Kirby fans will recognise from his first outing, and the number of sub-games hidden within the three tables is astonishing — the football one being particularly impressive. Pinball games are normally a little disappointing as programmers don't use the initiative to include features normal tables couldn't handle but Kirby's Pinball Land is full of gravity-defying features, and this makes for a supremely playable game which is well worth owning.

OVERALL

92

TETRIS 2

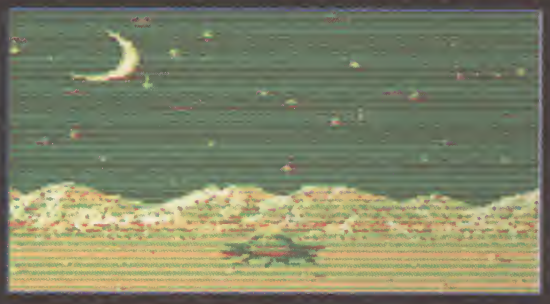


GAME BOY

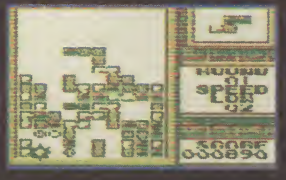
PUZZLE

£24.99

The game that puzzled a thousand Game Boy players is updated. How can they improve upon perfection?

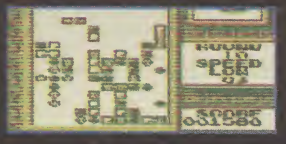


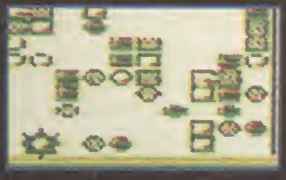
Slotting irregularly-shaped blocks together doesn't sound like a good way to pass a few hours, but try telling that to the countless Game Boy owners addicted to Nintendo's classic puzzler. As with all successful games, it was only matter of time before a sequel raised its head, and Nintendo have taken the basic formula and added a series of hazards to toughen things up. Shaded blocks have been left to clutter the play area, and similarly-shaded shapes must be positioned next to these in order to remove them.





However, as three like-shaded blocks must be lined up before they are removed, it's not going to be easy. All this, and the time between shapes is reduced with every successful removal, too...





CVG VERDICT

Improving Tetris was never going to be easy, and in adding the different shaded obstacles ideas Nintendo have managed to toughen it up a little. That said, though, for some unknown reason — but probably because it is very similar to the original — this sequel doesn't seem half as addictive or have any of the impact the first game had. The main please derived from the first Tetris was because it was so simple. All Nintendo have done here is speed the game up a bit and add the aforementioned hazards, and that interferes with the playability somewhere along the line. Good, but the original's better.

OVERALL

84

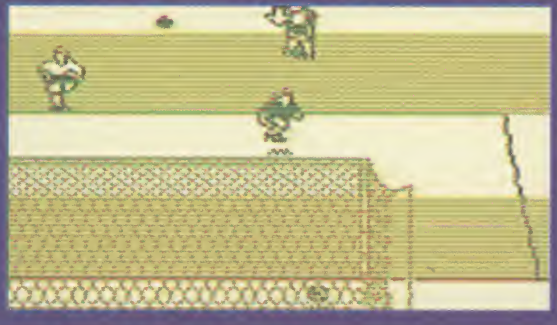
WORLD CUP STRIKER

GAME BOY

SPORTS

£24.99

'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go. Again.



The Game Boy and soccer games usually go together like bread and mud. With Kick Off failing to capture our imagination and Sensi wrecked by Blurovision, it's all up to Elite's World Cup entry to save us. Using a forced 3D perspective, with the pitch viewed from behind the nearest goal, WCS allows control over any international squad with the ultimate aim being to lift the all-important trophy. In terms of gameplay WCS is identical to the Super NES version with the closest player controlling the ball, and dribbling made easier thanks to the tried and tested 'glue-ball' syndrome where it only leaves your feet if kicked or tackled.







CVG VERDICT

World Cup Striker's path to glory should have been an easy one. There's no real competition as far as decent soccer games go for the Game Boy, yet Striker still manages to fluff a couple of passes. Whilst it looks great with large sprites and smooth-scrolling pitch, it often gets blurry and confusing. This is a real pity as the playability is definitely there, and WCS features all the free kicks, throw-ins and corners we have come to expect from a decent footy game. On a Super Game Boy, this is easily the best of its kind and worth a look, ordinary handheld users, though, may find the fuzzy movement off-putting.

OVERALL

87

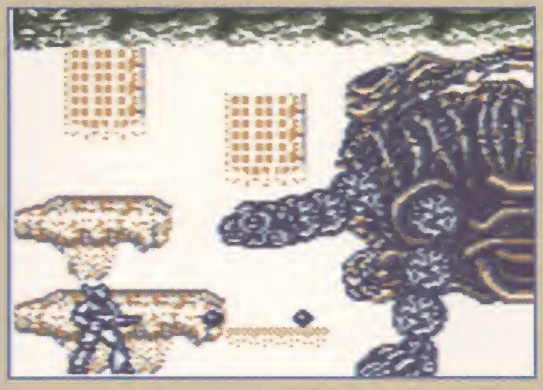
PROBOTECTOR 2

GAME BOY

SHOOT 'EM UP

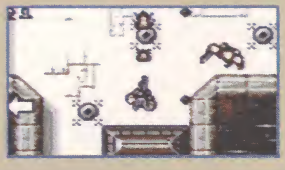
£24.99

Can a Super NES game be crammed into the relatively humble Game Boy? Konami thinks so.



Converted from the amazing Super NES version of Probotector, Konami's Game Boy version aims to cram all the Mode 7 jiggery-pokery of the 16-Bit game into the monochromatic handheld. The earth has been left a barren wasteland by an alien invasion fleet, and our cities are now patrolled by a group of mutants and alien soldiers. As a member of the Contra Team — a crack military operation — you've been assigned to wipe the aliens off the face of the planet by scouring the mixture of horizontally-scrolling and bird's-eye view play areas. Along the way, you'll find assorted power-ups to upgrade your gun and smart bomb collection, but between you and them are literally hundreds of troops and mutants, and their larger boss overseers.









CVG VERDICT

The way Konami managed to cram so much of the Super NES original into this Game Boy cart is amazing. The first Probotector for the Game Boy was fun but a little too easy, and this sequel rectifies that. Legging it across the incredibly detailed play areas is great fun with loads to shoot, and the addition of the levels where the action is viewed from above is both incredible to watch and a nice bit of variety. As can happen with fast-paced carts such as this, occasionally the Game Boy screen can't keep up and things get a little murky, but overall this is one of the best blasters for the little handheld.

OVERALL

82

JUNGLE BOOK

GAME BOY

PLATFORM

£24.99

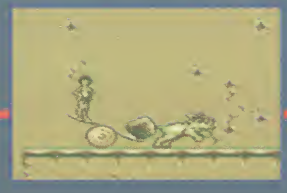
Oooh-be-doo, Mowgli's gone grey and blue-ooooo!

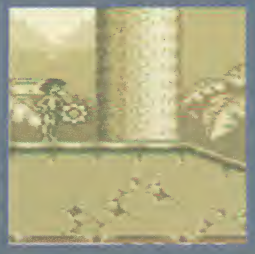


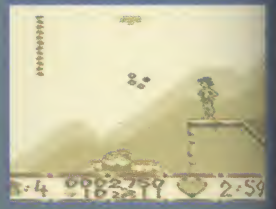
Disney's classic is Game Boy-bound as Mowgli and his jungle-based mates hit the monochrome wonder. Virgin's multi-stage jungle is fully recreated for the Game Boy with Mowgli donning his nappy and lobbing bananas at the countless foes out to thwart his progress through the jungle and the collection of a series of gems. Snakes spit, monkeys lob fruit back, and numerous bosses await the mancub at the end of the stage — all of whom are out to sap the little hero's energy and prematurely end his task. All the major characters from he cartoon have survived the transition, with Baloo joining in the fun and Shere Kahn an ever-present menace — and that king of the swingers, King Louie, has made it, too.











CVG VERDICT

As demonstrated with Cool Spot, Virgin has shown that it is way up there with the best when it comes to playable platformers. Jungle Book is a stunning-looking game which captures the atmosphere of the Disney film perfectly, and mixes addictive gameplay in with some of the best sprites the handheld has seen. In terms of action, it is very similar to Cool Spot, but whereas the Megadrive is flooded with games like this, Game Boy owners should revel in games as playable and different as this. A brilliant licence, and a playable game to boot.

OVERALL

87

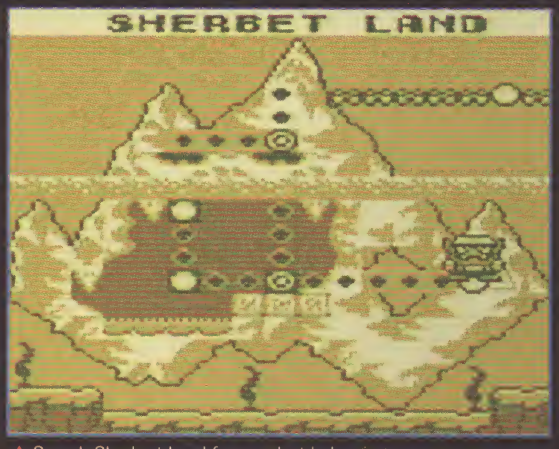
WARIOLAND

GAME BOY

PLATFORM

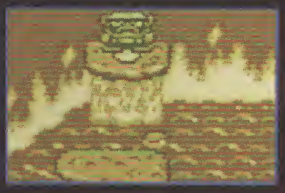
£29.99

Fed up of taking second billing, Mario's arch enemy steps up for a starring role.



▲ Search Sherbert Land for your lost belongings.

Wario's first appearance was at the end of Marioland II: Six Golden Coins where it was revealed he was behind the evil goings-on. Now, however, the oppressor finds himself oppressed as an unknown force enters his castle, chucks him out and scatters his ill-gotten gains all across his Warioland domain. Thus, resolving to take back his castle — and all the money he can get — Wario enters platform world of Mario proportions, with each of the stages displayed on a scrolling map and entered sequentially. As with past Mario games, Warioland involves a lot of jumping on bad guys' heads and coin collection, but our anti-hero's bulky frame offers him several advantages over Mario— he can shoulder barge baddies to kill them, and he can take advantage of some oversize hats left around his kingdom which give him more powerful charges or add a flamethrower to his inventory.



▲ Rocks can save you from getting a burnt bottom!



CVG VERDICT

Warioland seems rather too slow at first, but the collection of hats and some of the devious platform layouts soon draws the player in. All the baddies of past Mario games have been updated, and each of the game's sub-levels is presided over by a large boss which requires several hits before it kicks the bucket. In terms of presentation, Wario has a slight edge over the Mario games as the large sprites mean the screen doesn't seem to blur as much, yet the action still trundles along. Warioland is an excellent complement to the Mario series, and ranks alongside Kong '94 as one of the better Game Boy games of late.

OVERALL

92

COOL SPOT

GAME BOY

PLATFORM

£24.99

Virgin's red hero goes grey as he approaches his final conversion.







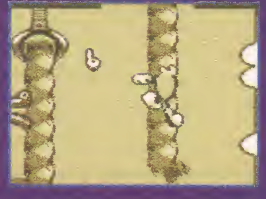
Aladdin programmer, Dave Perry's, rotund red hero arrives on the Game Boy looking a little grey around the gills, but bringing a complete selection of levels from the Megadrive original with him. Spot's mates have been kidnapped by an unknown force and locked in cages across a series of scrolling platform stages. Armed with an infinite supply of throwing objects and a neat line in acrobatic jumps and somersaults, it's up to Spot to free them all. Starting on the beach, he's immediately assailed by large crabs and insects, and this pattern progresses as Spot moves on to a pier,



into a 7-Up bottle (well, he is their figurehead character), and onto a level made up of slides.

CVG VERDICT

Spot finally comes to the Game Boy, bringing with him all the instant playability of the Megadrive and Super NES versions. The key to Cool Spot's appeal is the easy-going nature of the action. Spot is a dream to control and proves extremely responsive to the joypad, and before long you'll be pulling off somersaults whilst lobbing things at approaching enemies with ease. Whilst he may have lost all his colour, Spot still ranks alongside the best in the graphics department, too, with crystal clear backdrops playing host to brilliant sprites. Corking stuff.



OVERALL

88

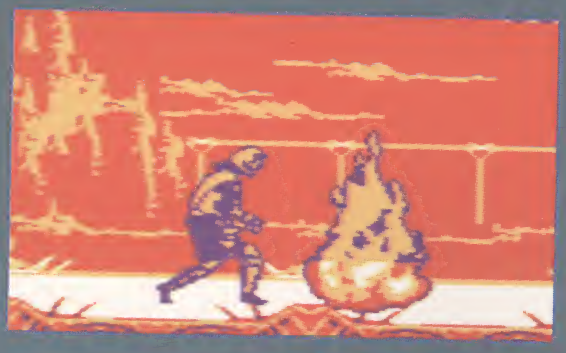
MORTAL KOMBAT II

GAME BOY

BEAT 'EM UP

£24.99

Monochromatic MKII arrives for the party — but how many guests have made it?

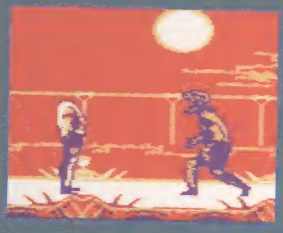


The plots the same as it ever was, but MKII for Nintendo's handheld is obviously cut down from the 24MEG 16-Bit version. The original dozen characters have been reduced to eight, with Baraka and Kung Lao amongst the four who have gone AWOL, but even so, most of the original gameplay has been included. Another casualty are the Babalities and Friendships, but programmers, Probe, have ensured that each fighter has one Fatality AND the hidden characters are in there if you can find them. Apart from those minor alterations, though, it's still the best of three rounds and, yes, it does have blood in it. It's just grey, that's all.











CVG VERDICT

It was a conversion most people thought couldn't be done, but Probe has done Acclaim proud with Game Boy MKII. Whilst the original Game Boy MK was a slow and tedious affair, MKII jots along at a fair old pace, with each of the eight characters boasting a full complement of special moves AND a Fatality each! The sprites are large and the two backdrops are as detailed as humanly possible. A corking conversion, and one that shows what the Game Boy can do when pushed.

OVERALL

90

MORTAL KOMBAT II

Mortal Kombat II for the Game Gear? I'd buy some more batteries if I were you...

GAME GEAR

BEAT 'EM UP

£29.99



Game Gear Mortal Kombat II is a truncated version featuring eight of the original 12 characters, yet still containing a full set of special moves for each fighter alongside one Fatality per person — and with a fair slice of blood, too.

One of the coin-op's hidden fighters is in there too, with Smoke making random appearances against an all-new brick backdrop.

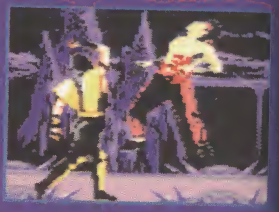
Two backdrops have survived from the coin-op, with the bouts taking place in Shao Kahn's armoury and outside in Baraka's wasteland abode — well, as he's not in the game, he won't be using it! Also, if a mate has a copy of the game, two Game Gears may be linked together for one-on-one action. Fight!











▲ Liu Kane bleeds as Scorpion lays on the high-speed punches

CVG VERDICT

Featuring all the moves and features of the Game Boy game, this Game Gear version on MKII is enhanced even further thanks to the colour the Sega handheld offers. The resolution is brilliant, and the sprites are huge lads and lasses who roll around the screen using some incredible animation. The Fatalities included are the easiest to pull off in any version, and this adds an immense feeling of satisfaction when offing an opponent. A stunning conversion AND a two-player game too. Nice one Acclaim.

OVERALL

88

MICROMACHINES

GAME GEAR

DRIVING

£29.99

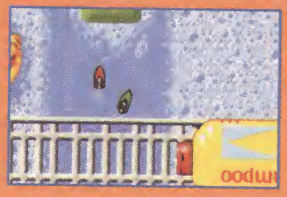
Codemasters revs its engines ready to take over the Game Gear market.



The red car and the blue car had a race... So sang the Milky Way advert, and never has a commercial been more prophetic, as Codemasters storm onto the Game Gear with a conversion of their Megadrive Classic. For the uninitiated, Micro Machines are tiny toy cars which come in a variety of shapes. In Micro Machines: The Game the player tears across a series of scrolling courses in one of these mini-marvels. The basic aim of the game is to beat the three computer-controlled cars or a friend (with two people playing on the same Game Gear) around a series of tracks. However, the twist comes in that the tracks are ordinary household rooms which look massive compared to the minuscule vehicles — as such, rulers and pens form the obstacles as opposed to the customary walls and oil slicks.

CVG VERDICT

Micro Machines is an undisputed classic, and this Game Gear version does nothing to tarnish that reputation. Somehow, Codemasters has crammed in loads of courses and still made them as devious and obstacle-laden as those of the Megadrive game. The major plus point in Micro Machines' favour, though, is the ease of control over the car. All the player does is accelerate and turn, but this simplicity, coupled with the tortuous tracks makes the game completely engrossing. I must admit to finding the two-player mode a little unusual (one player used the D-pad, the other the two buttons), but this doesn't detract from a classic racer.







OVERALL

89

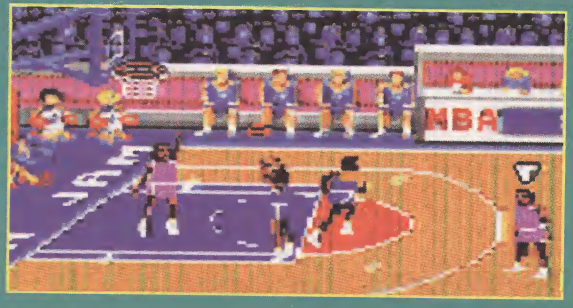
NBA JAM

GAME GEAR

SPORTS

£29.99

Blimey, some rotten so-and-so has shrunk the NBA league. They're only half an inch tall now...



Yes, even Game Gear owners can join in the Basketball fun as Acclaim's conversion of NBA Jam slam-dunks on to the machine.
All the teams featured in he 16-Bit original have been reduced in size and ported over, and the two-on-two action is the same as before.

Having selected your pair of players from the selection available, the horizontally-scrolling court appears on screen and it's time to block, run and dunk with the best. In keeping with the original coin-op, Game Gear NBA also makes use of the Turbo function, with the assorted fancy dunks and passes available to anybody with the energy bar to pull them off!





CVG VERDICT

Boomshakalaka! NBA Jam slams home for the Game Gear in a conversion which is little short of amazing. Acclaim has shoe-horned all the NBA players into the cart and still found room for the superb special shots and bursts of speed. While the sprites look a little odd on such a small screen, the game whizzes along at a fair old pace, with real end-to-end action as the two sides (including some incredibly intelligent computer-controlled sides) leg it from hoop to hoop. This is a conversion we imagined would be impossible, but we have been proved wrong and Game Gear owners should think themselves pretty lucky.







OVERALL

82

ONE GIANT

Only one magazine has 12 years' experience in reviewing games. Only one magazine has seen new standards arrive – 8-Bit, 16-Bit and now 32-Bit and 64-Bit...



That makes Computer and Video Games unique. Uniquely unbiased, uniquely comprehensive...

No matter what you own there's plenty of information for you each month in Computer and Video Games – because we review and compare every major game released on floppy disk, cartridge or CD.

OVER 25 MILLION READERS SINCE 1982...

LEAP FOR GAMEKIND...

And because we aren't devoted to any one machine, we can look at the new range of games machines with total independence.



AND STILL THE MAGAZINE REAL GAMERS READ

TIPS

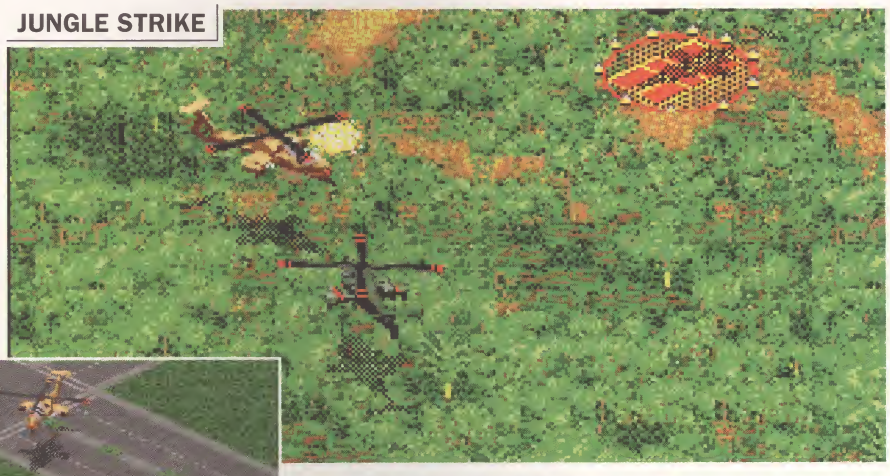
Even the best players in the world get stuck on a game every now and then and it really has to be one of the most annoying feelings in the world (if you haven't ever been stuck on a game please don't write in because you're either a liar or a smartie-pants neither of which is particularly palatable). This book is designed to help so we've collected together some of the hottest tips for the biggest games to help you out of your little tight spots. Enjoy...

MEGADRIVE

JUNGLE STRIKE

LEVEL CODES
LEVEL 2: RLMJBRXTPJK
LEVEL 3: 9VMKNL6PF3N
LEVEL 4: XTPJXV74JK
LEVEL 5: VNZJBXTNPJK
LEVEL 6: W6GFVWN4CDV
LEVEL 7: THDKT6PGCDV
LEVEL 8: 7CYV4GJFDB6
LEVEL 9: N46P3LMHPJK

JUNGLE STRIKE



JUNGLE STRIKE



JUNGLE STRIKE



AFTERBURNER 2

LEVEL SELECT
Fancy selecting levels on this rather dull playing game? Hey, at least you won't have to play any of the levels before the last one any more. On the Start/Options screen press and hold A, B and C before pressing the Start button.

CYBORG JUSTICE

It doesn't look very finished, but it's still pretty good fun, and now you – yes you — can access a secret options screen. Pause the game in Arcade mode and press C, B, B. C, C, A, C, and B.

ATOMIC RUNNER

Why if it isn't a selection of those there Action Replay codes for this under-rated platform shoot 'em up.
INITIAL WEAPON SELECT: FFC3F00XX
Where XX is one of the following weapons:
04: Light Ring
08: Morning Star
10: Homing Missile
INFINITE CONTINUES: FFC321000F
INFINITE LIVES: FFC3230004
INVINCIBILITY: FFC3240001
SIZE OF SHOT: FFDD0D000X (Where X is 1-4)
SUPER HIGH JUMP: FFDD1A0010
BONUS SCORE X1000: FFC312XXXX (Where X is 0-9999)

EA HOCKEY

If you fancy being able to play infinite games in which no-one is of course able to win or lose, perhaps these amazing Action Replay codes can help you.
00C0080000: FREEZE GAME TIMER
009A706002: FREEZE PENALTY TIMER

GOLDEN AXE

It might be getting on a bit, but if you've bought a Mega-CD recently you'll certainly have a copy of this lying around. If you're also in possession of an Action Replay you're a completely lucky geezer.
FF08820005: Always have five magics whilst Action Replay is switched on.
FF088000XX: Awards you extra lives once you enable the Action Replay. Keep it switched on for infinite goes.

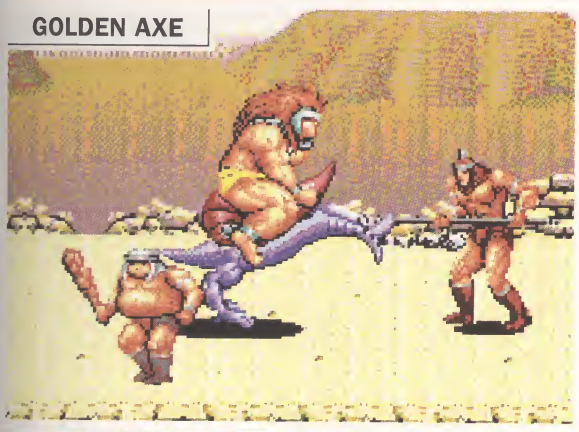
GOLDEN AXE



GOLDEN AXE



GOLDEN AXE



A great game this, and with plenty of youth-corrupting blood, too. You'll need some practical experience of the game to know what we're talking about here, but it's a bunch of secret rooms.

On level two, once Robocop falls off the second bar, press Left. When you can't proceed any further jump diagonal Left. Once you've done this press Up for a secret office containing two lives and a random bonus power-up.

As soon as you start mission five you should see a bar directly above Robo.

SKITCHIN



get someone to do this in our office), then walk to the far left and behind the wall you'll find there. Now press Up to enter another secret base.

If you're not sure what we were talking about there, then perhaps this weapons upgrade cheat will appeal to you. Pause the game and press B, A, C, C, C, A, B, A, C, C, C, A, B and listen out for a machine-gun sound effect which signifies the cheat has worked. Once you've got it going unpause the game and press A, B, C and Up to upgrade your current shooting iron.



FF08800002: Then again, you could just put this code in for infinite lives. It's up to you really.

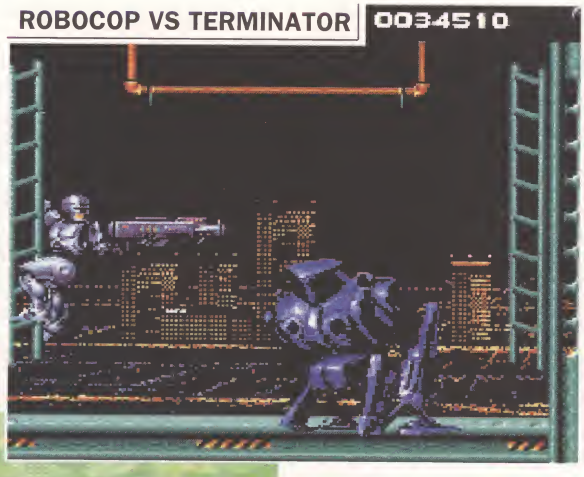
CHAKAN THE FOREVER MAN

A sound idea this game, but perhaps not the best horror platform hack 'em up on the market, never mind eh?. However, now you can skip all the way to the Elemental Zone without so much as engaging your brain. Which is just as well, seeing as you've bought Chakan and probably won't... oh never mind. Just take Chakan to the platform above the air portal in the Practice Mode and cast a Passage spell to skip all those levels.

ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR

ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR





Move slightly to the Right, jump on the chairs and then up onto the bar. Now press Left and you'll pass through the wall into a new secret office. Kill everything you see and then go into the door. Kill everything in this room too (if only we could

SKITCHIN'

It's a recent title and it's a bit like Road Rash, that's the best way to describe Skitchin'. And here's a bunch of secret hidden bits

SKITCHIN



door and claim your three random bonus power-ups and one extra life.

On mission seven, once you've descended the fourth ladder, walk to the left until you hit the wall. Now perform a dazzling diagonal Left jump through the wall. Continue pressing Left, proceed up the ladder and into the door for a secret hidden

for owners of this recent Road Rash-alike.

After 3.6 miles into race two on the Denver track jump into the "Burger & Drink" billboard to warp yourself to San Diego, where you must qualify for the Seattle leg of the race. Jumping into the "Buy Things" billboard warps you back to Vancouver (the

FLASHBACK

Gor blimey, this is a fine game and no mistake, Mr 'Olmes. If you think it's a bit hard and fancy a code which destroys all your enemies, no matter how powerful, just enter PIXEL on the password screen.

FLASHBACK



TIPS

first race), which is a bad thing.

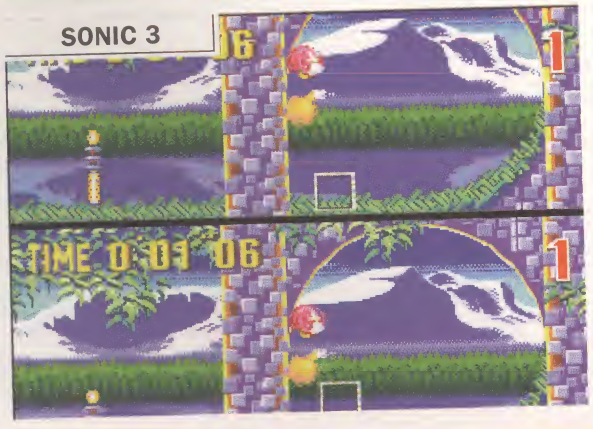
After 3.5 miles into the Seattle race, jump into the billboard featuring a woman's face and you're warped to LA. Once you reach this city jump into the right-hand billboard 1.8 miles into the race which has the rather '80s slogan of "Buy Things". This transports you to the wonderful town of Toronto. Should you top this level you reach Detroit, then, if you beat the Detroit skitchers, you make it to Chicago. Once you're in Chicago, hit the left-hand billboard 6.8 miles in, which bears the wise words "Don't Drink and Skitch" which should see you safely to Miami. Crush and destroy the opposition here and you're through to the final in New York. Finish fifth or above and the grandiose title of "World Champion Solo Skitcher" is all yours.

SONIC 3

If you can't beat that last Robotnik — and it is a bit of a pain — this cheat, which works only on the Launch Base Zone, should help you out somewhat. Go to the first set of klaxons, press down and start a Super Spin. As you keep spinning between the two klaxons you summon more and more enemies, the certain deaths of which, as they fly into you in a moth-like style, earn you more and more points. Eventually each Badnik is worth 10,000 points, meaning you get an extra life for every five you mercilessly slaughter.







ALADDIN

Eeh, I remember when David Perry were knee high to spacehopper and he did this game. still, let's not get carried away. We've only got a level skip for the game. It's not like we're doing a big retrospective or anything. Anyway, if you'd like to get past a level you're stuck on, simply pause the game and press A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A.

BOB

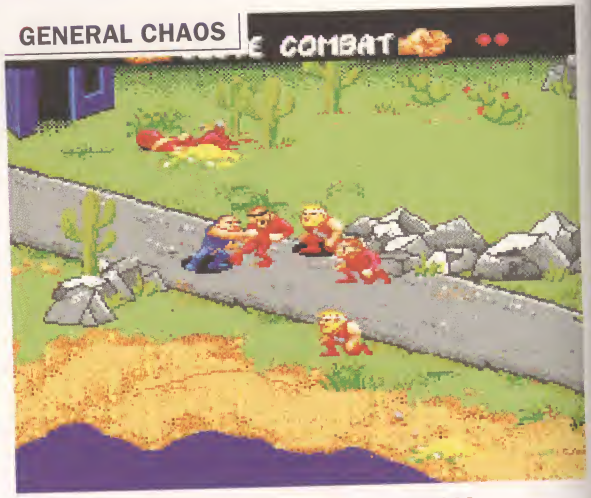
Not a bad game, a very bad name and no mistake. But who are we to judge, eh?





Except, of course, to say that our cheat for this title is dead top smart and, indeed, ace. For a full supply of ammo and remotes, plus infinite lives, hold down all the fire buttons on both joypads as soon as the FOLEY PRESENTS screen pops up. A little sound effect should inform you that you've got it right if you have.

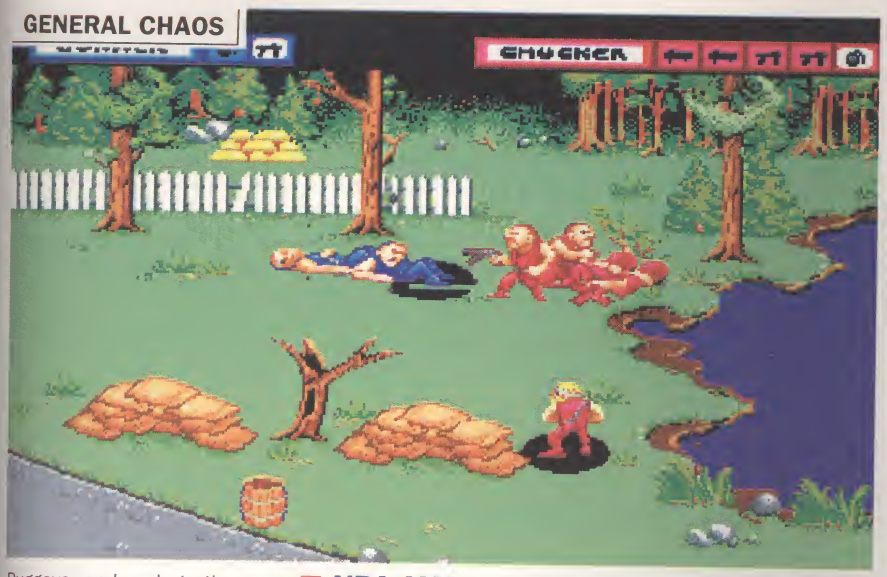
GENERAL CHAOS



This was a pretty groovy game when it came out, and it shouldn't be too hard to get hold of a copy on budget now. if you fancy trying out this here cheat. Or perhaps you've already got a copy. We don't care. Anyway, first off, make sure you select a team with a Chucker. Whilst you're playing the game, have your Chucker throw a grenade, and pause the game whilst it's still in mid-air. Although both teams are frozen, the grenade will still continue its descent and destroy one of your helpless opponents.

PUGGSY

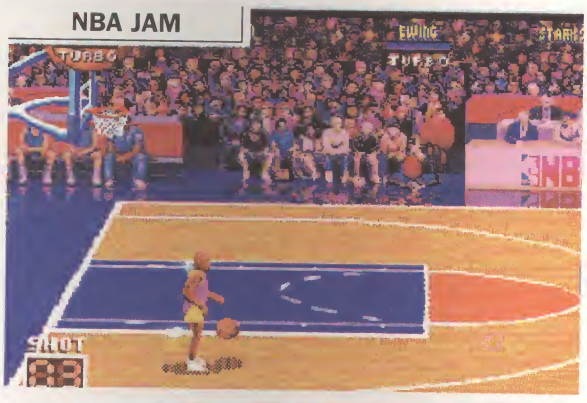
We've got a flaming office load of these little inflatable

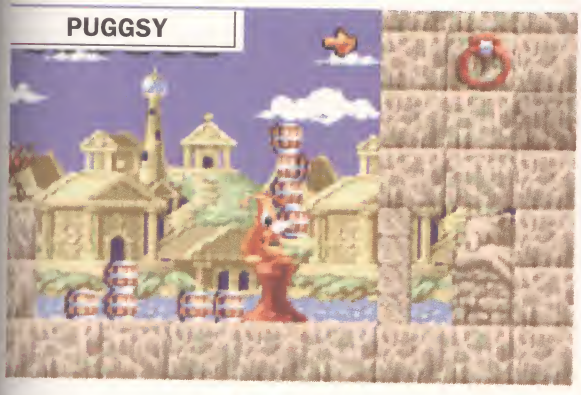


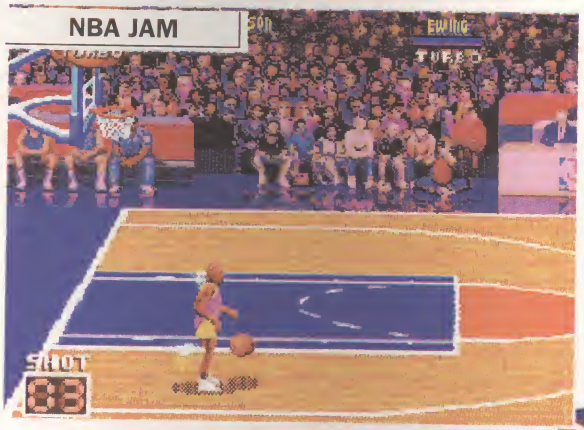
Puggsys, and we hate them. However, we'd never pass such a harsh judgment on the game, especially because we've never had to play it right through thanks to this smart level code which gives you full access to all of the levels with 49 of them already completed. The code is:
600 276 107
304 315 463
035 756 536

NBA JAM

Just about everyone knows the secret character codes by now, but if you don't, here they are, all nicely reprinted just for you. Actually, if you don't know them we'd better explain what they are. They're codes that allow you to play as some secret hidden funny people. To get them to work you have to select YES to enter your initials, input the first two letters of the code and place the cursor over the third letter without entering it. Hold down Start and either A, B or C, depending on the instructions with the following codes.
BILL CLINTON: ARK + A
AL GORE: NET + B
MARK TURMELL: MJT + A
RIVEIT: RJR + B
DIVITA: SAL + C
AIRDOG: AIR + A
CHOW-CHOW: CAR + C
Plus, if you're like that bloke out of Time Trax and you've got superhuman reflexes, here's a Turbo code to make your little chap shift correspondingly faster. Press A, B or C five times on the "Tonight's Match-Up" screen, then hold A, B and C until the court appears. The words "Power Up Turbo" appear over your player's name if you've got it right, and you're now granted unlimited Turbo energy.











GAME GEAR

SPIDERMAN

When you reach Electro's lair, head straight for the key room, and make your lycra-clad hero drop straight down to the left-hand side of this area. Pick up the Game Gear icon. Now visit Spidey's crash pad and press button 2 to access a hidden game of Pac Man!

TERMINATOR

To get a level select, as soon as the Sega logo comes up on screen, press and hold Button 2 and Start, whilst rotating the D-pad clockwise until two little numbers appear. Select the number of the level you want and you're away.

MICRO MACHINES

There's a great hidden link-up game for this title, but you'll need two linked Game Gears, each with a copy of Micro Machines, in order for it to work. As soon as you switch on each machine, hold down A, B and Start. If you've done it right you'll be treat-



TIPS

ed to Jon The Programmer's Squinky Tennis, a conversion of the age-old favourite Pong.
If you're on your own with this game, there's another cheat which should come in handy. During the Breakfast Bends course, drive around the course in the wrong direction. After one lap you'll hear a noise which indicates the come-first-in-every-race cheat has been activated!

MEGADRIVE EXTRA

■ JUNGLE BOOK

Hey bud, you look like the sort of person who wants a level select for this David Perry-initiated platformer.

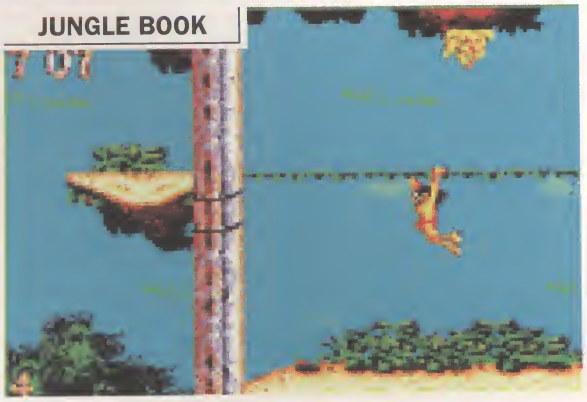
Well, here is one, damn your eyes. When the Disney logo spins onto the screen when you turn on your Game Gear commence rotating the D-pad clockwise until you hear a chime. Now use Left and Right to select your starting stage.

■ PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS

Interesting he ain't but Pete Sampras has formed the basis of a damn fine Codemasters game. Here's a little something to pump you up...

ROUND LOCATION COURT OPPONENT CODE
11 ZURICH CLAY
D LOVERIDGE
LUCKY
12 MEMPHIS HARD
F CHANG
HOUSE
13 MILANO GRASS
P GIOVANI
CUE
14 BARCELONA CLAY
C YUSTE
DURHAM
15 HAMBURG CLAY
R ZENGERLE
JUMPING
16 NEW YORK HARD
G HIMME
HAPPY
17 BERLIN CLAY
S SCHMIDT
MEGA
18 FLORIDA HARD
P SAMPRAS
PLAYPETE





■ PINK PANTHER GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Rinky dinky do, here's some tips for you... Enough of that palava, try this little gem which should leave you in the pink. Plug both pads into the Megadrive, switch the little devil on, and hold A and C on pad one and B on pad two. You should hear a crash after the Techmagik logo fades. During the game, if you PAUSE and press C, a cheat menu will materialise. Press LEFT or RIGHT to change the stage, B to make you invincible, and A to restore your health meter.

■ STREETS OF RAGE 3

Here's a top guide to get those top elusive specials out of those top guys in this top game:

ZAN
Multiple Blitz move — X and UP/LEFT twice

SKATE
Skate towards and jump kick — X and DOWN/RIGHT twice
Skate towards and flash kick — X and BACK, UP/LEFT, and UP in one continuous motion

BLAZE
Stationary attack but longer jump — X and FORWARD, UP RIGHT, and UP in one continuous motion
Additional sliding sweep — X and anti-clockwise semi-circle from DOWN to UP

AXEL
Stationary attack, but circle move instead of dragon smash — X and DOWN, DOWN/RIGHT, and RIGHT in one continuous motion.
Dragon punch — X and an anti-clockwise semi-circle from LEFT to RIGHT

■ SHINING FORCE 2

To get the most out of this top RPG, try this little lot of goodies for a laff...
To access Configuration Mode, as soon as the SEGA logo appears, quickly press UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, UP, and B. You will hear a short tune if it has been entered correctly. Now hold START to whizz through the witches options, and choose to start a new game or continue. The witch should now enter you into Configuration Mode where Turbo Speed, Auto Battle, Control Your Enemies, or Complete The Game options can all be accessed.
Use the Configuration Mode to complete the game, reset, and begin a normal game. Select your CONTINUE file and immediately hold START and UP, and press C. A witch will offer you a sound test (if you really want one).
Again using the Configuration Mode to complete the game, reset and start a new game. After you have named your character, a game difficulty option materialises.

MEGA-CD

■ FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Shoot for gold with this collection of FIFA codes which should increase your enjoyment of this already fab game. To access the new options, simply go to the OPTIONS screen and tap in the following.
SUPER POWER
B, A, B, B, B, B, B, B, B, B.
SUPER OFFENCE
A, A, A, A, A, B, C.
SUPER DEFENCE
B, B, B, B, B, C, B.
DREAM TEAM
A, A, B, B, C, C, A, A,.
SUPER GOALIE
A, A, A, A, A, B, B, B ,B, B, B,.
INVISIBLE WALLS
C, C, C, B, A, A, A, B.
CRAZY BALL
C, A, B, C, C, B, A, C.
CURVE BALL
B, A, C, B, C, C.

■ SONIC CD

There's certainly a lot of levels to this one, even if they aren't as interesting as the ones in Sonic 2 or 3, and here's your chance to look at any one of them you like without using undue amounts of skill. Simply press Up, Down, Down, Left, Right and B on the title screen for a wholesome level select. Be warned though, you're only able to explore the level you've selected.

SUPER NES

■ ALIEN VS PREDATOR

You now possess the power to skip levels in this beat 'em up. But I wouldn't get too excited, because all the

enemies are still exactly the same on every single stage. Still, go to the config screen and hold L, R, X and A on pad two and then press Start on pad one to save yourself a lot of game-playing hassle.

ALIEN 3

Aliens fans would be much better advised to go for this rather snazzy title instead of the crippled cart above, and if you're a bit crap at games, you can always use these passcodes to get on in life.
STAGE 2: QUESTION
STAGE 3: MOTORWAY
STAGE 4: CABINETS
STAGE 5: SQUIRREL
END GAME SEQUENCE: OVERGAME

TUFF E NUFF

This was called Dead Dance in Japan, which we reckon is a much better title than this rather lame Americanism. Still, the game's pretty good, and we have a whole big bunch of level codes especially for you (as Kyles 'n' Jase may have said).
STAGE 2: 427 011
STAGE 3: 537 071
STAGE 4: 500 760
STAGE 5: 401 637
STAGE 6: 511 617
STAGE 7: 412 536
STAGE 8: 562 506
FINAL STAGE: 463 455

TUFF E NUFF





AFTER SAN FRANCISCO (BOSS): 7SYJP60

AFTER GREECE: VD7C5V1
AFTER BUENOS AIRES: HBZ*LWY
AFTER SYDNEY: FKT94MD
AFTER MEXICO CITY: X*KQ6WF
AFTER PARIS (BOSS): *9R246J

TUFF E NUFF



ALIEN VS PREDATOR



MARIO IS MISSING

If you fancy being "Edutained" you might like to invest in this game. Although we would advise against it unless you're only six and not too bright. And not easily bored. But if you have got it and you're stuck, try these terribly useful passwords.
AFTER ROME: PC3*NVB
AFTER BEIJING: 5VL23WG
AFTER NAIROBI: YZC*L3G
AFTER RUSSIA: PTPJ3YG
AFTER NEW YORK: 5G3W4*K
AFTER RIO DE JANEIRO: DVDQPQM
AFTER TOKYO: PYF1LHQ
AFTER EGYPT: P5F9LH8
AFTER LONDON (BOSS): 2SW86T3

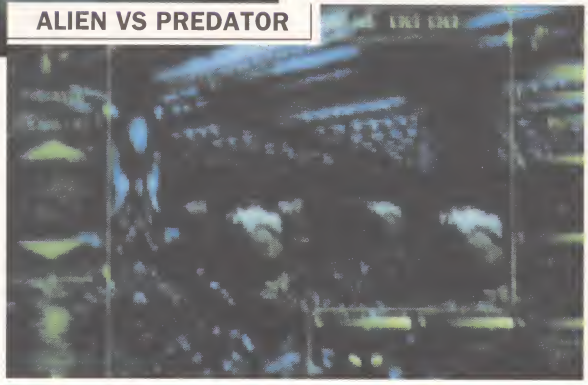
MARIO IS MISSING



ALIEN VS PREDATOR



ALIEN VS PREDATOR



MARIO IS MISSING



TIPS

FIFA SOCCER

We all like this game, and this game likes us, which is why it whispered these secret passwords to us whilst we were sleeping. Fortunately we're all lucid dreamers and remembered them perfectly. These are all button combinations you'll need to perform on the Options screen. If you can't get them to work first time, exit Options Mode and try again.

INVISIBLE WALLS: YYYX-AAAB
CRAZY BALL: XABYYBAX
CURVE BALL: BARBYL
SUPER KICKS: BABBBBBBBB
SUPER GOALIE: AAAAAYYYYY
DREAM TEAM: AABBYYXX
SUPER OFFENCE: RRRRRLR
SUPER DEFENCE: LLLLLRL

FIFA SOCCER



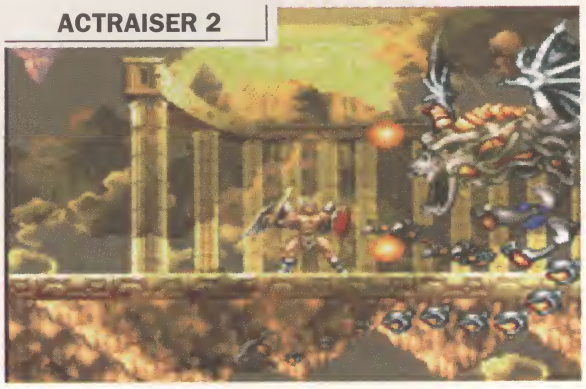
FIFA SOCCER



ACTRAISER 2

Another top quality title, and yet another top quality tip from your pals here at CVG. This is a password to reach the final level of the game with a whopping 38 lives, enter MFMJTVSYFVPX on the Hard skill level. PS — make sure you're good at the game before you try this.

ACTRAISER 2



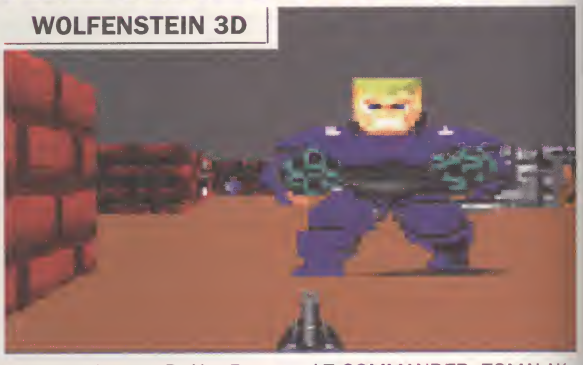
WOLFENSTEIN 3D

Right, you'd better have a mate on hand before you try out this tip for unlimited ammo and weapons. First press R on control pad 2, than Start. Now pause the game and press R, Up, B and A. If invincibility is more your bag, try the same initial pad 2 business followed by B, Up, B and A. What about skipping levels? Why, that's as easy as Up, B, R, B. And accessing a secret map? A, Up and B is the code you'll be wanting.

WOLFENSTEIN 3D



WOLFENSTEIN 3D



ACTRAISER 2



STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

Usurp that baldy slap-head git with ease by using these great rank-skipping codes. Although we wouldn't advise going in as Ensign, because that's a bit lowly.

ENSIGN: Q
LIEUTENANT: BARCLAY
LT COMMANDER: TOMALAK
COMMANDER: RO LAREN
STARSHIP CAPTAIN: LOCUTUS

TINY TOONS 2

They're wacky, they're spaccy and really rather cracky! That's the Tiny Toons for you, and now you can play an equally wacky hidden game in this, their second portable outing. Simply press B and Start on the title screen to access this exciting feature, or A and Start in the same location for a harder main game.

NBA JAM

If you'd like to improve your defending skills in this rather natty little arcade conversion, follow these instructions carefully. Tap X, A, B or Y five times on the "Tonight's Match-Up" screen, making sure to keep your chosen button held down on the fifth press until the tip-off. If you get this working you'll see a blue shape in the bottom-left corner of the screen before the

NBA JAM



NBA JAM

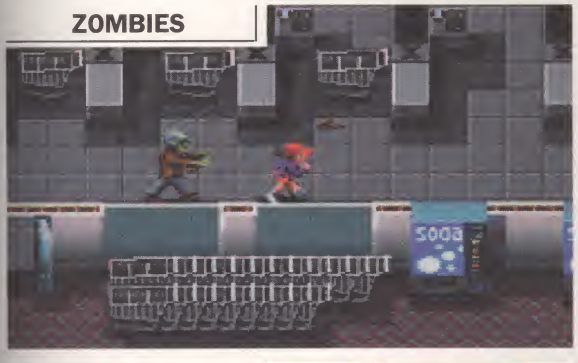


ball is tossed up.

ZOMBIES

Having trouble with the last boss? Have you *got* to the last boss? Well, if you have and you always end up getting slaughtered when he changes into that big creepy spider (just to spoil the ending for anyone who hasn't got that far yet), just move your player into the bottom-left corner of the screen, where he can't reach you. Keep an eye out for the little spiders he launches at you, which can still attack you, but you'll be totally safe from the main boss.

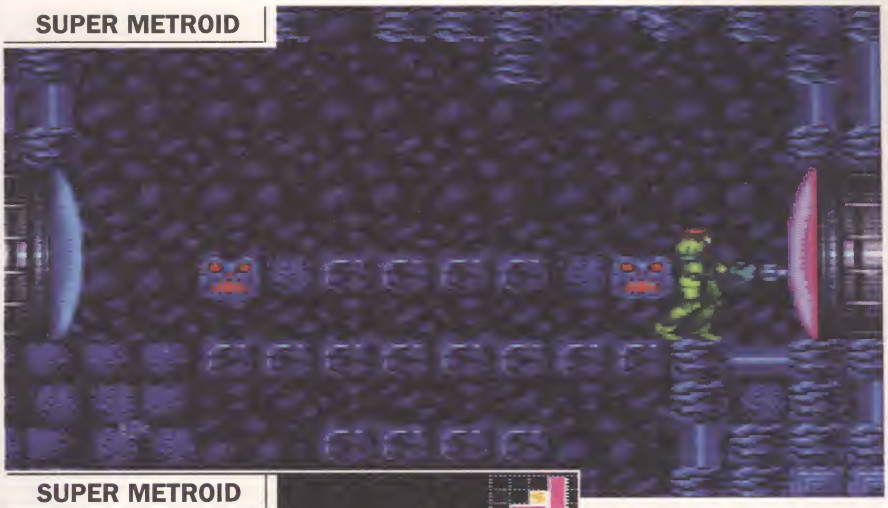
ZOMBIES



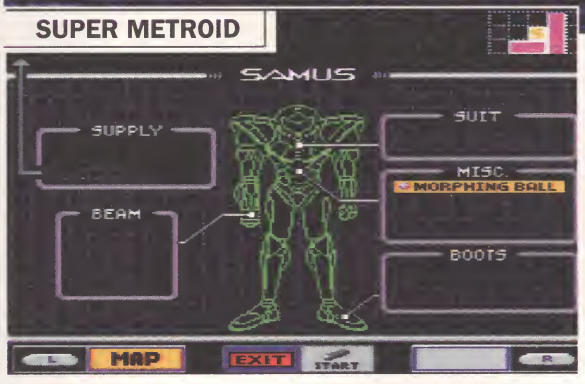
ZOMBIES



SUPER METROID



SUPER METROID



If you're not fussed about completing the game but want to the play the Day of he Tentacle bonus game, try this useful code. Enter BCDF on the password screen and start the game as normal. Surprise — there you are, and you can pick up a bazooka before you play the first real level, after which you're transported back to the Day of the Tentacle bit!

AERO THE AEROBAT

Want to skip levels in this title? I would if I were you. Really, it isn't worth playing them all the way through, no matter how much you paid for the thing. Well then, go to the options screen and press Down, A, Down, Y, Down, A, Down, Y and you should hear a little plinkly noise telling you the cheat is activated. Now start the game as normal, and pause the game as Aero falls from the sky. Now press Up, X, Down, B, Left, Y, Right, A, L, R and Select. Actually, it'd probably be less bother to play the levels.

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST

Actually, this game isn't all that hard, but there's a correspondingly un-earth-shattering cheat to get you through it. First of all reach level 1-3, which isn't difficult. Go into the beavers' lodge, dive into the swimming pool and swim right through a secret passage to collect a nice 2-Up.

SUPER METROID

This is one of the best games to hit the Super NES in a very long time, but it's also one of the hardest. Well, here we are to make your life easier once again. This time it's a cheat to kill the Dorrigan boss at the end of the Maridia stage without breaking into a sweat. Once Dorrigan grabs you, use the Grappling Beam to latch onto one of the electric side panels. The current passes through your kinky robot suit and should electrocute the boss within seconds, so long as you time it right.

YOSHI'S SAFARI

Commiserations, SuperScope owners. You finally get a game for your drainpipe add-on and it's way too easy. Luckily for you we've got a cheat to make this game much HARDER. Wait for the title screen to

YOSHI'S SAFARI



TIPS

YOSHI'S SAFARI



pop up and then press L, R, X, Y and Start simultaneously. You'll know if the cheat works when the background turns purple.

■ TURTLES TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

All credit to this fine title for holding its own in a world of Streetfighters and Mortal Kombats, and even managing to fit a couple of hidden player characters in as well as all those moves and turtles and things.
The two characters of which we speak are Karai and Ratking, and here's how to select them: First off go to VS Mode and get either player to go on to Leo and keep pressing Right until you get to Shredder. Now turn your Super NES off, back on, and repeat this process once more. This time when you get to Shredder's portrait press Right. You should now have free reign of the two new players.

■ SUNSET RIDERS

Infuriate your enemies! Infuriate your friends too! This is a really, really cruel and twisted cheat for use in two-player games of this Western platform shoot 'em up from those lovely guys and gals at Konami.
If you're running low on continues and you're about to die, press Start on player two's control pad to steal all their continues!
The CVG crew do not hold themselves in any way responsible for any fist fights which result from the use of this tip.

■ MARIO ALL-STARS

Here's one for all you people with an awful lot of time on your hands.
Punch the second block in at the very start of the game to reveal yourself a mushroom. Hit a block to bounce this over the wall, being careful not to hit the Koopa Troopa. Grab the mushroom, but make sure you don't scroll the screen on. Go back and break all the remaining blocks. at the bottom except for the one on the far right. Time it carefully so the Troopa is left on this final block. Jump onto the block which previously yielded your mushroom and then leap onto the Koopa. Now just keep bouncing on him to score scores of lives. Don't go beyond a mere 125, though as the game crashes once you reach 126.

TURTLES TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS



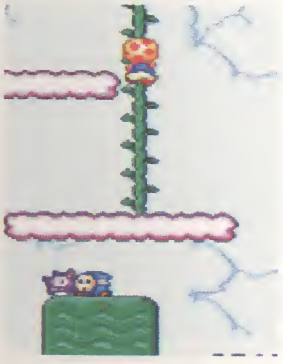
TURTLES TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS



MARIO IS MISSING



MARIO IS MISSING



NES

■ DOUBLE DRAGON 3

This is actually a pretty fine game, but it truly is very very hard indeed, and you'll probably find good use for this fantastic level skip cheat which, conversely, is very very easy. Simply press Star and the A button at any point during the game to advance to the next stage.

SUNSET RIDERS



SUNSET RIDERS



GAME BOY

CASTLEVANIA 2

You know, we've got this code for the last level, but because this game's so good we really think you should play it all the way through yourself. Then again, this is a tips guide, so perhaps we'd better just print it after all. Enter Ball, Heart, Candle Heart as your password and you'll get right through to Dracula himself.

MORTAL KOMBAT

Well, they said it couldn't be done, but we've proven the gaming community — nay, the whole world — wrong once again and come up with a cheat to play as Goro in the portable version of the original MK. When THE END appears once you've completed all the battles hold Up, Left, Select and A. Now enter your initials as usual and next time you start up the game you're away.

LINK'S AWAKENING

Is there a bit of Link you just can't get past? Well, there's actually — shock, horror — a bug in this game that should help you. When you reach a part of the game you have difficulty with, go to the far edge of the screen. When Link is halfway over the edge press Select to call up the map. Press this again and Link is warped to the edge of the next screen.

RAGING FIGHTER

Quite a lot of people liked this game, and if you're one of those who count themselves amongst the proud owners, let us present you with what we call the "Play the same characters against each other cheat". On the title screen, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, A and B. You should see the words COMMAND ON appear on-screen, The Same Fighters Play-Off option is now there for the asking.

PC

DOOM

There aren't many clones of this game on the market at the moment, are there? Anyway, if you're the proud owner of the original, we've got a lovely bunch of cheat codes lined up for you. Unless, that is, you're playing on Nightmare level and you own a copy of Version 1.2, in which case they won't work.

IDDQD: INVINCIBILITY
IDKFA: ACCESS ALL WEAPONS WITH FULL AMMO AND ALL LEVEL KEYS
ID BEHOLD: SECRET POWER-UP MENU AT TOP OF SCREEN

DOOM



DOOM



REBEL ASSAULT

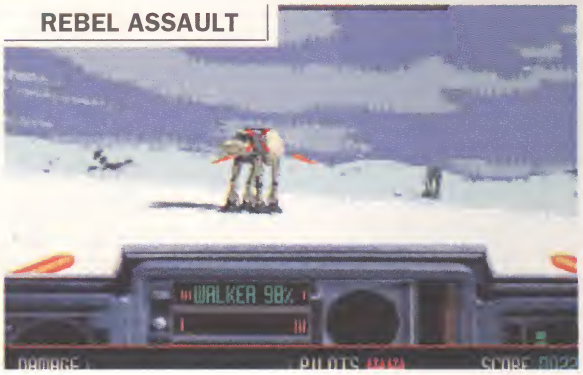
Nice game, shame about the difficulty level eh? Well not for long with this barrage of cheats. Boot up the game, calibrate your joystick and wait for the LucasArts logo to appear in front of the Death Star. Now press Up & Fire, Down & Fire, Left & Fire then Right & Fire. A depressed-sounding voice should say "LucasArts" if you get it right. Now whilst playing the game you can use the '+' and '-' buttons on your numeric keypad to raise or lower your damage rating, and use any of the following keys to transport yourself to another stage.

1: FIGHTER TRAINING
2: ASTEROID TRAINING
3 KOLAADOR
4: STAR DESTROYER ATTACK
5: TATOOINE ATTACK
6: ASTEROID FIELD
7: PROBE DROIDS
8: AT-AT ATTACK
9: STORMTROOPER GUN-FIGHT
A: PROTECT THE TRANSPORT

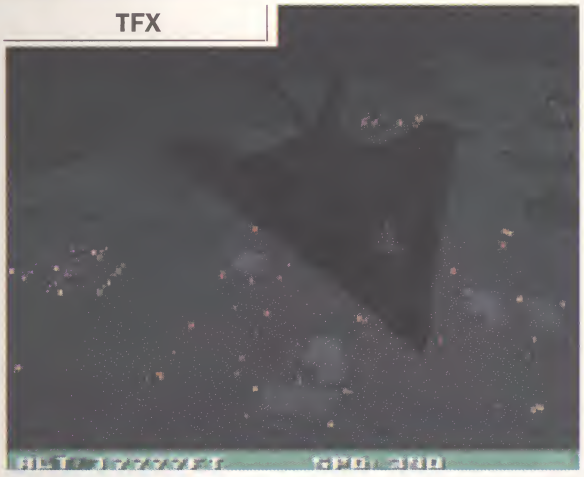
REBEL ASSAULT



REBEL ASSAULT



TFX



TFX



TIPS

FRONTIER

If only it was as easy to make cash in real life as it is in Frontier. The best technique for this title is to buy a passenger cabin and take someone on board. Go to the New and Reconditioned Ships screen and try to buy another vessel. You should get some more dough at this point. Repeat this exercise until you are rich beyond your wildest dreams.

THEME PARK

Right, this one's a bit long-winded, but well worth trying out. Start a new game with the nickname CHEAT and borrow as much money as the bank will allow. Save your game in Slot 0 and quit back to your old DOS. Head for the save directory and, using a hex editor, load up the file named CHEAT.Go. Edit your lovely hex positions 12 to 16 and put all the values at 0. Load up the game again and wonder of wonders — it's Doom! Actually, that's a lie, you'll really find that your debt has disappeared. Dosh in full effect, homeboy! If you're a bit crap at computers and wouldn't know a hex editor from a fork down your

ALIEN BREED



ALIEN BREED



B: YAVIN TRAINING
C: TIE BATTLE
D: DEATH STAR ATTACK
E: THE BIG CANNON
F: TRENCH RUN

TFX

If you're having trouble in this ace flight game, take advantage of this handy bug to save your skin. If you've been shot to ribbons or you're running out of fuel, hit ALT-L to switch to autopilot, which will safely guide you back to base no matter how bad your condition. There's another tip for this fine title which should appeal to the impatient and psychotic amongst you. If you fancy skipping the training missions, if, for instance, you make a mistake on your first combat mission and don't want to repeat things over so soon, here's the deal. Once you've typed out your call sign, press Ctrl-Enter, instead of the usual minimal Enter, and you're off to lose your legs.

THEME PARK



THEME PARK

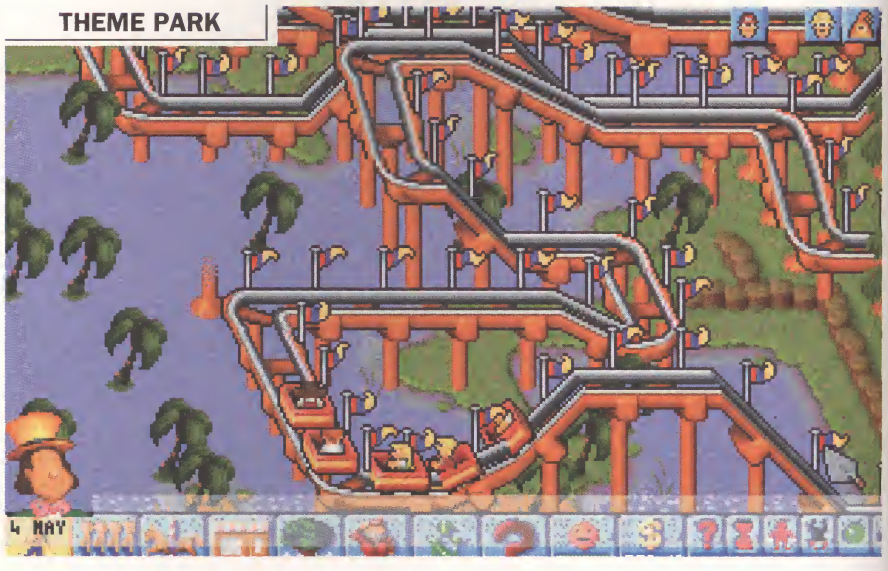


ALIEN BREED

Oooh, this is a scary game isn't it? Indeed, if it weren't for this comprehensive list of level codes we'd all be cowering in our beds just thinking about it. Anyway, you should be able to handle the first five levels, so we'll kick off the list at number six.

6:CCGDGBBBB
7: HHIAAJJIG
8: GGDDJJHFD
9: JIECBFGFF
10: HGGEDCCB
11: HHHGFGDCC
12: IHDCHGHFF

THEME PARK



PINBALL FANTASIES



throat, there's slightly easier way of cheating yourself into an enviable position. Go to your directory where you'll find a file called demo.??. Now rename this file to replace one of your old saved games. Now go back to the main game and select this new file to play with a really rather good big park.

PINBALL FANTASIES

If you've bought this ball fest, you might want to try these codes for secret mystery special effects. Wait for the table to scroll up and down (which, you may have noticed, it does with some regularity) and type in any of the following cheat-effect passwords.:

EXTRA BALLS
TECH
GREETS
TSP

GABRIEL

UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

It's another PC cheat which requires some prancing about between the game and the operating system, but if you reckon you can handle it, you'll no doubt find this cheat for $900 million in your bank account (not in real life) most useful. Start a new game and save it in the first game-save slot. Quit to DOS and go into Windows. Open up Notepad in Accessories and get into the file known as UFO\GAME_1. Select the 'Any File' option and open file liglob.dat. Now put two u's (press the U key and ALT GR) to the top line and save off. Now load up the saved game and check that wad.

ALONE IN THE DARK 2

Actually, at this point, can we just brag a bit and say we've already seen Alone <I>4<P>, and it looks mighty brilliant. Anyway, if you're one of those old, outdated types with a copy of this ancient game, why don't you just get back to the Stone Age, huh? Oh, you know we don't mean it. We've actually got a cheat to have yourself a near-invulnerable character, although it's not one of your quickies. Right, when you start off in the house, head for the dumbwaiter in the kitchen and collect the poison you should see there, and also the poison from the work surface in the same room. Make and drink the poisoned wine, then hold down Enter until the wine is back on the inventory. Your body points should, at this point, be at least (or most) minus 1000. Repeat this process until the minus disappears and you should have about 32,000 body points. To top this up, collect and use the frying pan once you've reached the 32,000 mark.

UFO



ALONE IN THE DARK 2



ALONE IN THE DARK 2



ALONE IN THE DARK 2



PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

This is one of the hardest games going, and it's also one most people seem to have in their collection. If you're still having trouble with it after all this time, perhaps the following cheat might help you. In fact, it will help you, like it or not. Start

TIPS

the game by typing in the legend PRINCE MAKINIT, and use the following keys for your desired hack.
Shift-N: Skip to next level
Shift-I: Invert the screen (not much help)
Shift-T: Get a life (meaning a 1-Up, not... oh never mind)
Shift-+:Increase time
Shift-Minus: Decrease time
R: Resurrect dead prince
k: Handy smart bomb

LEGEND

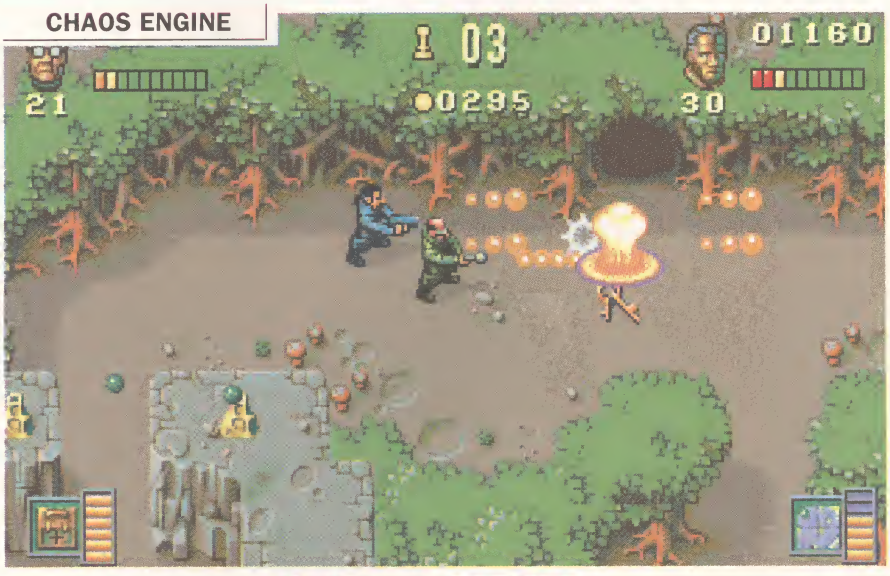
This is guaranteed to make life a lot easier for you should you be troubled by this lovely RPG, as it lowers your AC to -255, which isn't bad. First off, create your runemaster with an AC of no better than +11, with no hefty armour or equipment. Have a little wander around and then save the game. Now go and have a look around all the armourers you find until you see one that stocks bracers. If there isn't one, just wander around a bit more and try later — you can always revert to the saved game as soon as one appears if you're worried about time. Now buy the bracers and put them on your runemaster, and get his armour class to +7. Now remove the bracers, and you'll have perfectly straight teeth. Ha ha. No, you'll actually have that rather impressive AC of -255.

AMIGA

CHAOS ENGINE

It's not bad this, is it? Oh go on, we liked it. Anyway, perhaps you've got it and you're a bit stuck. If so, allow us to come to your rescue with these here level codes.
WORLD 2 KDLVB8HMR36V
WORLD 3 6D881D6CPOBD
WORLD 4 61WCD92WPODK
And as if that wasn't enough, here's some Action Replay codes for infinite lives and special powers for both players. Simply freeze the game and pop them in for all the cheatiness you can handle.
PLAYER 1
LIVES: C21407
POWERS: C25B2E
PLAYER 2
LIVES: C21409
POWERS: C25BA4

CHAOS ENGINE



CHAOS ENGINE



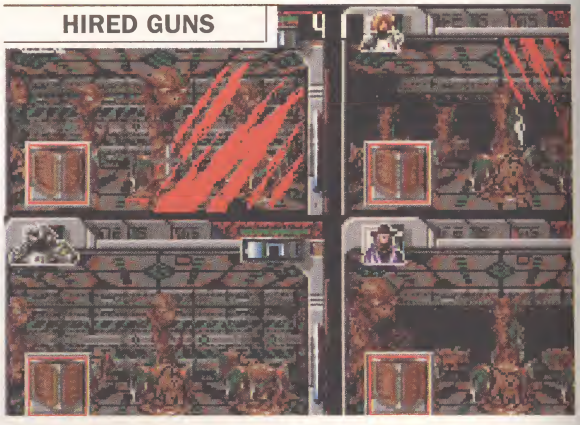
BRIAN THE LION

This is a pretty good cheat if you ask us, and it's dead simple to perform. Simply press CAPS LOCK whilst you're playing and click on the Right mouse button. Whilst CAPS LOCK is on press L for 9 lives, R for nine life points and K for 999 crystals. And while we're at it, why don't you try pressing P so you can play all the levels? Eh?

HIRED GUNS

It's easy enough to see how to figure this one out. Type in Amiga while playing this shooting title and you'll immediately be granted infinite ammo and energy, which makes the game somewhat easier. In fact, it makes it a piece of cake. A bit like typing CHRISTINA, which allows you to move onto any area of the campaign map and select the same team member more than once for any team. Not quite so useful is the word APPLEGATE, which merely opens all the doors on your level. Hang on, CHRISTINA and APPLEGATE? Some sad pervy programmer has been watching a bit too much late-night TV, methinks.

HIRED GUNS



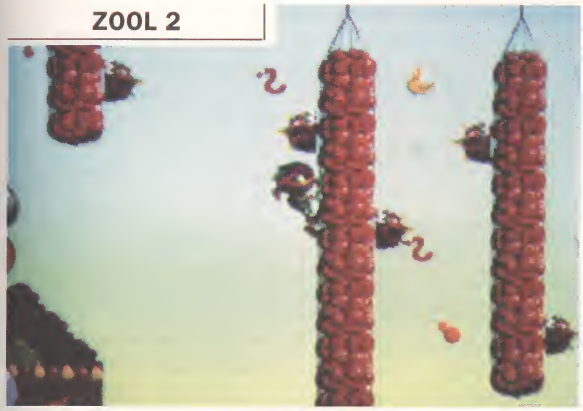
HIRED GUNS



ZOOL 2

He's everyone's favourite ant ninja from the Nth Dimension (unless you're a sad boy ant and you fancy Zool's girlfriend) and now you can help him through his second outing with these tips. When you see Zool on the title screen and "Press Fire for Options" is flashing on the screen, type in any of the following codes:
CREMOLA: 10 LIVES
VISION: 20 LIVES
TOUGH GUY: INVINCIBILITY
OLDENEMY: INFINITE TIME
ALCENTO: 99 ITEMS
KICKASS: INFINITE SMART

ZOOL 2



BOMBS
BUMBLEBEE: SKIP STAGES
BY PRESSING RETURN

CANNON FODDER

If you're one of those power-mad military types who likes killing people — even tiny little computer people — just for the fun of it, this tip to get you 50 rocket launchers on Mission 8, Phase 3 should go down well. Head for the bottom-right corner of the map and you'll chance upon a small bush right in the corner. Peek behind this and you find 50 rocket launchers. So it must be quite a big bush, really.

GRAHAM GOOCH WORLD CLASS CRICKET

If you're a big fan of champion-level jumping insects, you'll probably have been disappointed to find that this is in fact a sports game. Still, if you've got it this run-scoring cheat will probably appeal to you.

CANNON FODDER



When a ball is bowled, hit it anywhere you want, but don't run. When the nearest fielder picks up the ball, pause the game before it leaves his hands. Keep the game paused for three seconds and then unpause. Now you can just go ahead and run as many times as you like, because that fielder is frozen in time, a bit like Dr Sam Beckett in Quantum Leap. Once you've racked up an improbably high score press Escape to de-freeze the poor fielder.

SUPERFROG

This cheat is so completely simple you'd probably never work it out on your own, except maybe by accident/ Press f10 whilst you're playing to make your sprite invincible. Also, type in IN to skip to the end of your current level.

GOAL!



GOAL!

Fancy yourself as a bit of a Vinny Jones do you? Well if you have recurring sending-off problems, just follow this simple procedure. When one of your players is invited to a early bath, press the ALT key to bring up the substitution menu. Click on the player who's just been red carded and swap him with a brand new player. Go back to the game and that same new player should run onto the pitch!



SUBURBAN COMMANDO

Bad luck to all those who actually parted money for this steaming pile, but, in a strange reversal of fortune, we've got a set of level codes so as you can skip past most of the boredom.
LEVEL 2: PIXIEDIXIE
LEVEL 3: THOMAS
LEVEL 4: POSTMANPA

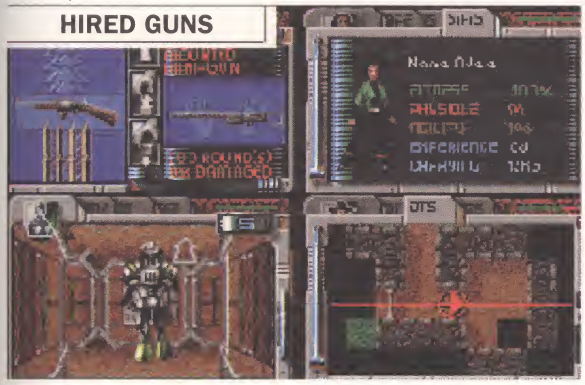
DINOSAUR DETECTIVE AGENCY

The following codes are level-specific energy-restoration jobs which you can type in without having to pause the game or anything like that. Plus, if you hold down the Left mouse button whilst you're typing your code in, little Dino is warped to the end of the level to boot.
LEVEL 1: DINODICK
LEVEL 2: JURASSIC
LEVEL 3: DINOSORE
LEVEL 4: DINOMITE
Oh how my sides ache from the amusement level of those pun-filled codes.

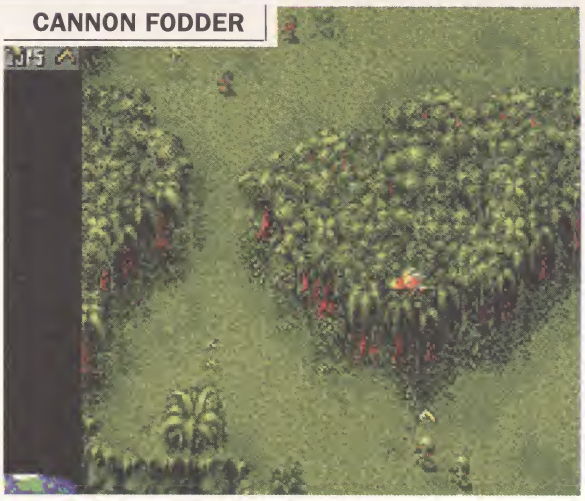
DESERT STRIKE

We can all remember how exciting and revolutionary

HIRED GUNS



CANNON FODDER



MORTAL KOMBAT

Beating the thunder out of the rather lacklustre SF2 conversion on the Amiga, this is probably the best beat 'em up on Commodore's machine. Apart from the sequel, of

TIPS

DINOSAUR DETECTIVE AGENCY



this was when it came out, and before it was followed by 12 billion "similar" sequels. Anyway, this one's got the best cheat, too, if you ask us. Just type in the word HARDCASTE and you'll be rewarded with infinite, and unconditionally unlimited, weapons with which to destroy the forces of evil.

FLASHBACK

This is one of those cheats which has passed into gaming folklore, but if you're a bit of a neophyte on the Amiga scene, or you're just not very attentive, here it is one mo' time.
If you fancy walking through any wall or door in the gamé, follow this simple procedure. Walk right up to the offending obstacle and turn around so you've got your back to it. Hold down the fire button and tap the joystick in the direction you're facing. Straight away push the joystick in the opposite direction and release the fire button. Conrad should now carry himself straight through the impassable solid. And we're not talking constipation here.

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER

Want to watch a 147 break without having to view snooker games for the next 10,000 years? Then prepare for the trick shot mode in this fine simulator. At any time during the game, press F7, F4 and F1. Go back to the control menu and call up the Demo Mode menu. You should see a new option called "Do a Random 147 Break". Pick this and the computer will indeed do a 147 break at your request.

JAMES POND 3 (AMIGA 1200)

You know, all this cheating really is bad for you. You'll get through all your games in about ten seconds and feel you've been robbed because you didn't have the patience to glean the full amount of pleasure from your new piece of software. In fact, we're of half a mind not to give you any more tips. But we will. Here's a secret cheat menu for this muchly-ignored but pretty good platformer. Pick any point in the game you desire to type in the word NIGHTMARE. Now when you fancy a cheat menu, simply press the F10 key.

PREMIER MANAGER 2

Bob Hoskins might be overdoing the chirpy lovable cockney rogue diamond bit, but he really is correct about how useful phones are. Especially in computer games, evidently.
If you fancy giving yourself a bit of a boost in this top quality football management game, dial the following numbers in your management telephone.
781560
220769
000123
250967
Not only do these codes boost your weakling players' attributes to the levels of supermen, they also grant you access to a hidden fruit machine where it's possible — should you hit the elusive jackpot — to pick up a large number of special power-ups. This, needless to say, does a lot to improve your standing with directors and fans alike.

CD32

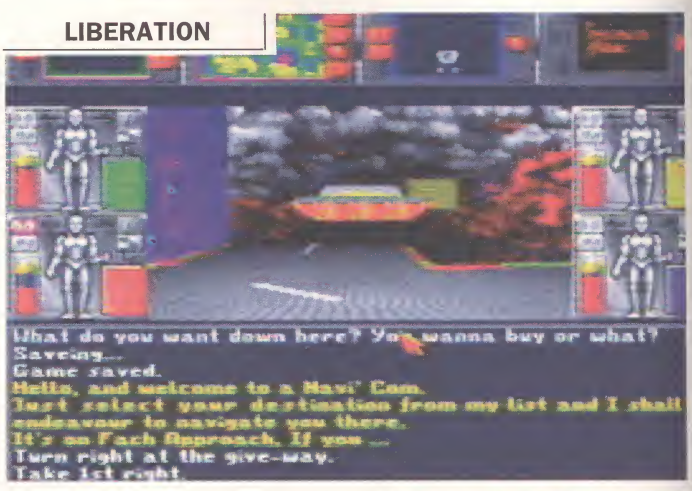
LIBERATION

If you're after information (and if you're not you're obviously getting this confused with another game) here's a way of getting it all for gratis. When you query someone and they tell you an answer is going to cost you money, head for the Violence option. Instead of threatening them or beating them up, simply say you'll have to think about paying them. The characters in this game are so stupid they'll fall for it every time and blab away, and you can just walk off without paying a bean. Ahahahaa! And, just to save you a bit more effort, get to the end of the first level where you're given the crystal which tells you where Toyagan is. What you probably don't know is that this

LIBERATION



LIBERATION



LIBERATION



same crystal will tell you where every prisoner is on every level, so you don't have to play through each one fully.

ALFRED CHICKEN

You can rustle up a warp zone for yourself in this bizarre but nonetheless playable platform puzzler, as long as you don't mind a bit of faffing about. After entering the first door on the first level, go right until you reach the first wall. Jump up as high as you can whilst pressing Right, go into the door and you should find some jam. After that, head for the first spring on the left and perform a low jump onto the two star bricks, then jump up onto the next platform, manoeuvring yourself to the far left of this. Jump up and, at your highest point, shoot to make it to the warp zone. You might be relieved, but don't mess around or you'll be hacked to death by a circular saw within a few seconds of arriving.

ALFRED CHICKEN



MICROCOSM

This is a bit of a good-looking game, isn't it? Ooh, it's just beautiful. And if you fancy slaughtering your way to the end in about fifteen seconds, here's a cheat for you. During the flying sequence which follows the intro, press Green, Blue, Yellow, Red, Yellow, Down, Green, Right, Red and Up to give yourself huge supplies of every single weapon and let yourself skip to the end of any level. Thank you.

JAGUAR

CRESCENT GALAXY

We're first for Jaguar reviews, and we're blinking first for flipping Jaguar tips as well, and don't you forget it. You need two control pads for this one, but it has a number of functions. First off, with pad 1, key in 1, 9, 3 on the title screen. Now grasp pad two firmly and use A or B to speed up and slow down the background graphics respectively, C to fire a special weapon, 4 to make yourself invincible and Option to skip your current level.

CYBERMORPH

Hey, here's one for all you Jaguar owners out there, because you may recognise this as the free game you received with your machine. Yes, it's a bunch of ace level codes you might want to use.

BONUS WORLDS
LEVEL 1: OLOPE
LEVEL 2: METROPOL
LEVEL 3: PICO
LEVEL 4: OLYOTRIS
LEVEL 5: JENWELCH

THE LEVEL CODES THEMSELVES
LEVEL 2: 1328
LEVEL 3: 9325
LEVEL 4: 9226

3DO

THE HORDE

This ace cheats allows you to see all of the intros, intermissions and other cinematic animations in this 32-bit title from Crystal Dynamics. Start the game as normal, and now press and hold Up, A and B. Whilst holding these, pause the game (button P). When the game is paused press Right, A, Left, Left, A, Up and B. Now press P again and you can watch away to your heart's content, perhaps asking the neighbours in for a look too if you like. If you fancy skipping a scene, just press any button.

LYNX

BATMAN RETURNS

There seems to be very few cheats for Lynx games, happily, Batman Returns, seems to be the exception and has a couple of good short-cuts. On the title screen, press Up eight times, Down 12 times, Right 15 times, Left 19 times and Option 1 27times. Now start the game as normal and pause it. For a level skip press Option 1 and unpause and for an invincibility cheat press Option 2 and unpause.

KETHER



CD-i

KETHER

Not so much a cheat as a bit of a con, this one, but it still works pretty well. Once you reach one of the flying sequences, keep steering yourself towards the green energy pods and ignore all the flying enemies. The energy pods crop up so frequently that, so long as you get them all, you'll easily survive to the end of the level.

APPLE MACINTOSH

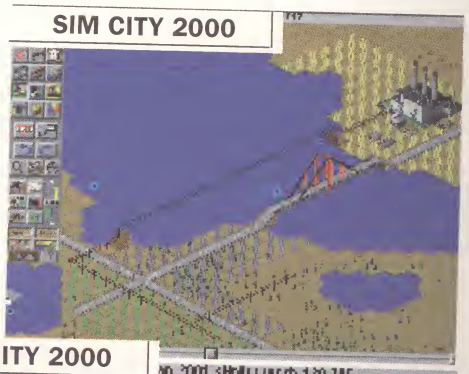
SPECTRE MAC

If you're playing this on the net (which means you've got a cushy job and an unobservant boss) and you want to know where your opponents are at any given time, simply type in the word GOD. This brings up a comprehensive map of the combat zone, allowing you to pin-point any target. PS: don't tell any of your mates about this one or they'll do it too.

SIM CITY 2000

It's easy to make a pile of cash in this game, providing you get off on the right foot (this has nothing to do with freemason-like copping off antics either). Pause the game to start with. Now don't build any zones larger than 5x5 and get started with three residential zones, three industrial and one commercial. Cut your electronics and aerospace taxes to 0 percent and buy the cheapest power station you can. If any of your zones start dropping in demand, lower the taxes in these regions, and try to avoid taking out bonds unless you can still make a profit whilst paying them back. Wait 60 years or so (not real-time) and bump up your electronics and aerospace taxes for a vast throbbing fortune. Ahahahaa!

SIM CITY 2000



SIM CITY 2000



VIRTUAL REALITY: gaming of the future?

For too long Virtual Reality has been totally amazing but not quite available yet. At last it is with us – and at a vaguely sensible price. The question is: Is it the future of gaming as we know it?

What the hell is virtual reality anyway? It's a fair question. So many things get called 'virtual' this and 'virtual' that, but they don't look much different from your standard stuff. So what's all the fuss about?

The real McCoy is what's called stereoscopic immersive VR. This is the ultimate VR games experience — using a VR helmet or head mounted display you can look up, down and around a 3D world simply by turning your head. As you turn your head, the headset translates the movement to the game and the view moves accordingly. Meanwhile, the game carries on all around you, the stereoscopic effect fools your eyes into believing that objects have real depth and solidity, and 3D sound makes the whole thing unbelievably real. It's like climbing right into the middle of a game.



▲ Virtuality Inc's new 2000 Series arcade games boast state of the art texture mapping and shading.

You move around this virtual world with a VR mouse or a floating joystick like the CyberPuck. If you want to take it to extremes (like you've got a couple of thousand pounds to spare) you can even manipulate objects with a 'dataglove', and 'datasuits' could involve the whole body in the simulation.

It doesn't suit every type of game, of course, VR Tetris would still be dull, whatever you did with it. Syndicate would also be a complete non-starter because the view's all wrong.

But, any game with a suitable 3D viewpoint is a candidate for the VR treatment. Doom, Ultima Underworld, Alien vs Predator and Wolfenstein would all be ideal first-person perspective games for VR. Get right in there and do some real damage... just remember to watch your back.

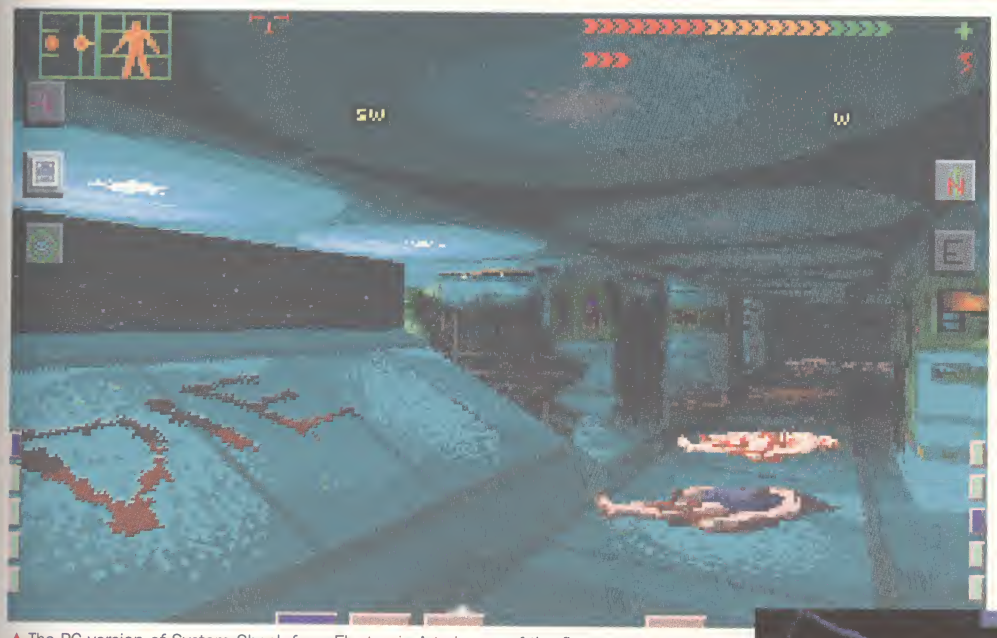
Then there are sims — combat sims, flight sims, racing sims, you name it. Imagine a flight sim where you can acquire targets just by looking at them. You want to try something like this? Then check out the VR version of DID's Inferno, and Looking Glass Technologies' Flight Unlimited texture-mapped flight sim running on a PC and VR headset. Or what about playing Daytona and being able to look back over your shoulder to see who's giving you the shunt, or directly at the driver alongside you as you run him into the wall at 200mph? Fancy it?

This is what makes a true immersive VR game so special the feeling of 'being there'.



▲ See the world through completely new eyes with the Forte VXF headset.





▲ The PC version of System Shock from Electronic Arts is one of the first games to get the VR treatment for the CyberMaxx headset.

Believe me, a good VR game with the right equipment is like nothing you've ever played before.

Give it five minutes and you'll completely forget the real world exists.

SO LET ME AT IT!

That's always been the catch, hasn't it? The 'good game, good equipment' bit. Will it ever change?

Back in 1992 the first arcade virtual reality (VR) systems started to appear and you could dive into a computer generated 360 degree 3D world simply by handing over your two quid and donning the headset. Suddenly, VR was big news. Move over consoles, move over Megadrives, PCs and 2D coin-ops, virtual reality had arrived!

Unfortunately VR arrived, and then sat still for two years. What virtual reality couldn't hide was the fact that nine times out of ten the early arcade games were dodgy at best and downright crap at worst.

And, even where the games were halfway decent the technology wasn't doing them any favours at all: sluggish bordering on comatose, jerky, low resolution, uncomfortable and expensive to play. Top stuff. Not what you'd expect from a lump of hardware costing in the region of £13,000.

So the novelty soon wore off, and the expected explosion of VR games never came.

All those VR companies who might have come up with some workable kind of home Virtual Reality setup gave up the idea and went back to working for the military and heavy industry on all sorts of hush-hush, double secret programs.

HERE TO STAY

But now VR is back making the headlines again. This time it looks like we're actually going to get some radical new VR hardware.

There are at least four affordable-ish (somewhere under £400 pounds or so...) headsets now ready for launch, they run on normal machines not super-computers and the performance of the games is pretty damn close to that of the same game on a standard monitor. Even if the resolution is usually slightly lower, it's not really that noticeable — not like it used to be, anyway.

What's more, the new wave of home VR systems are all designed to work with existing games with only the smallest changes to the software.

This is very important — it means it doesn't cost games companies much to produce VR-compatible versions of their games. That's why headset's from the likes of VictorMaxx and Forte can claim over a hundred games titles in the pipeline.

That's why Origin has decided that all its 3D games from now on will support up to four types of VR headset, and is even working on a VR-specific game called Bounty Hunter. That's why Bullfrog has a VR version of Magic Carpet up and running already.

If you've ever tried one of those Virtuality arcade machines, you'll probably agree that VR has the potential to make incredible games, it was just the hardware that let it down and the software was nonexistent. But now, everything is ready for a VR headset in every home: the hardware has come on in leaps and bounds, it's getting cheaper all the time, and it looks like software publishers are starting to take a major interest. If that's the case, we can all start looking forward to a new breed of games that are even harder to put down than the best 2D stuff is now.



▲ Namco's Ridge Racer tries to emulate the Virtual Reality experience — with some success, we might add.



WHO'S UP TO WHAT IN VR?



▲ The CyberMaxx already has more than 50 software companies developing for it and although it'll just be available for PC owners initially, developers VictorMaxx are hoping to get it to work with all consoles and home computers by the end of the year. You can even hook it up to your TV for a big screen effect (although not 3D) and special VR music videos are already in production.



▲ The Forte VFX headset is one of the most promising of the new breed of affordable VR headsets — high reolution, stereoscopic LCDs and three axis motion tracking — it's got the lot.



▲ It may look like a kinky vest but the Aura Interactor is actually the last word in VR fashion accessories and promises to take you to all-new dimensions.

FORTE VFX1 HEADSET
£650
Zye Technology
0293 538666

Not the cheapest, but one of the most promising by a long chalk. It's upgradable, runs on a 386 PC or better, has a dead cool flip up visor and it's actually comfortable to wear. It's also very easy to develop games for: current titles include: Flight Unlimited, Speed, Magic Carpet, 3D Dino, Delta V, Inferno among others. The VFX1 is already running a non-stereoscopic version of Doom — the most talked about game of the past year. Where else would you go to find a genuine 3D chainsaw?

CYBERMAXX VR HEADSET
£399
ICE 0453 756993

Again PC-based, the CyberMaxx uses a three-axis tracker and the headset is just as light although it doesn't have the flip up visor that's so handy in the VFX1. The CyberMaxx will ship with a game, and a 3D world generator. Fifty-five companies have signed on the dotted line to produce titles for the system.

AURA INTERACTOR VR VEST
£TBA
Aura Systems
0101 310 6435300

Wired for games. Weird! The Aura vest is basically a strap on amp and speakers which sits on your chest and gives out vibrations triggered by game sounds. Sounds like something you'd get from a dodgy shop in Soho. It's a bit like the electronic vest you get in a laser-war game like Quasar. And yes, you do look like a bit of a pillock wearing one but the effect is well... interesting.

SEGA

Sega previewed a low-cost VR headset at the US Consumer Electronics Show in 1993, intended for release last Christmas. However, the system has suffered delays in development and will not be available until the end of this year, if then. The company has enlisted the help of Virtuality Inc (the company that makes all those arcade VR machines) for this sub £300 headset. Sega is also supposed to have commissioned an expensive report on the health aspects of VR, but refuses to publish the results. Is it good news or is it bad? We want to know.

NINTENDO

Once considered releasing a black and white VR set-up. Binned the idea on the grounds that it was, well, black and white. Rumour has it that the firm has the patent rights to the unique Dataglove. No news as yet as to what they're going to do with it though.

VIRTUALITY INC.

VR pioneers Virtuality Inc are keen to develop VR for home users, but remain committed to an expensive six-axis tracking system which would seriously dent your wallet. The company is ready to release it's new 2000 series arcade systems any day now, complete with texture mapping, shading, lighter headsets and smoother movement. There are also rumours of a tie up with IBM to produce a low(ish) cost headset system for homes and offices.

But it's not just games...

Of course, VR doesn't just have to end with games. For example, architects use VR to view building designs before they get built, and pilots use VR simulators to learn to fly without ever leaving the ground.

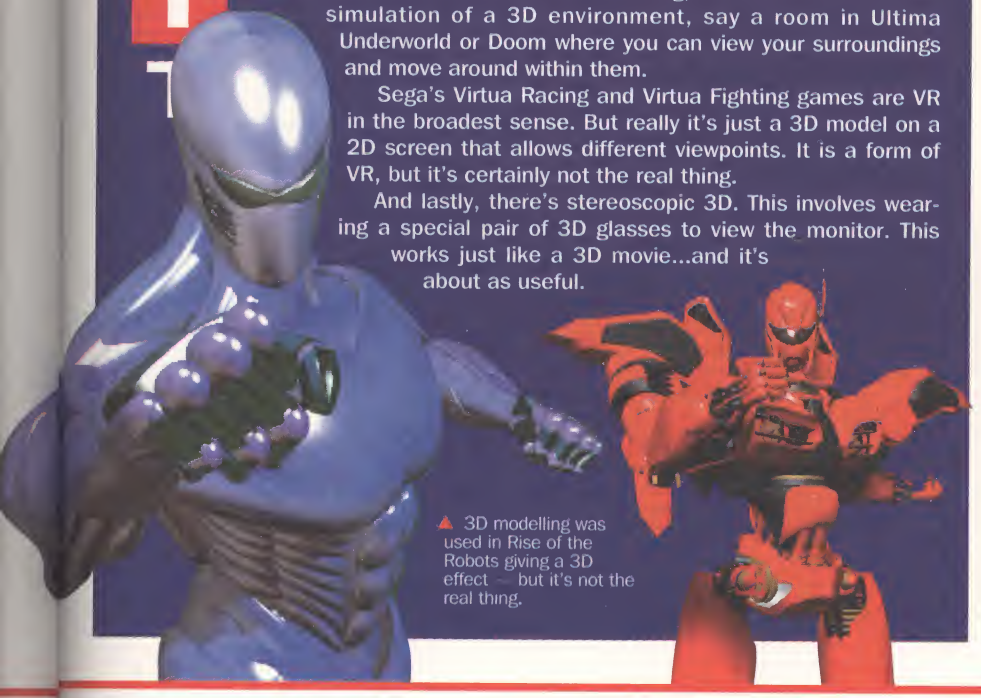
Beyond that, the sky's the limit: engineering, training (the US police, apparently — God help us), property sales and education. There's even the rather macabre idea of 'virtual medicine' where research is carried out on 'virtual corpses' rather than the real thing. I guess it's less messy this way and you don't have to keep a whole load of mangled bodies hanging around in the hospital fridge.

NOT EVERYTHING CALLED VR ACTUALLY IS

There are all sorts of things that come under the general heading of VR. The most common is 3D modelling, for a start. This is a 2D simulation of a 3D environment, say a room in Ultima Underworld or Doom where you can view your surroundings and move around within them.

Sega's Virtua Racing and Virtua Fighting games are VR in the broadest sense. But really it's just a 3D model on a 2D screen that allows different viewpoints. It is a form of VR, but it's certainly not the real thing.

And lastly, there's stereoscopic 3D. This involves wearing a special pair of 3D glasses to view the monitor. This works just like a 3D movie...and it's about as useful.



▲ 3D modelling was used in Rise of the Robots giving a 3D effect — but it's not the real thing.

THE HISTORY OF VR

1832
Charles Whetstone invents the stereoscopic viewer, a machine that fooled the eye into thinking that flat 2D objects possessed depth and were in fact 3D.

1962
A young cinematographer invents the 'sensorama', a huge wardobe-sized machine that combined pictures, sounds, movement and fan-blown air to simulate a ride through a flower market or the streets of New York. It wasn't a big success ...

1965
Ivan Sutherland, a young engineer, develops the first head-mounted computer display and co-founded Evans & Sutherland, a supplier of military simulations.

1981
Thomas Zimmerman has a dream to conduct an invisible orchestra. Wiring up an old gardening glove, Zimmerman connected the glove to his Atari 400 computer. The invention was later to become the Dataglove.

1984
William Gibson coins the term Cyberspace in cult Science Fiction novel 'Neuromancer'

1992
W-Industries launches first mass-produced commercial Location Based Entertainment (LBE) system — those giant arcade VR installations

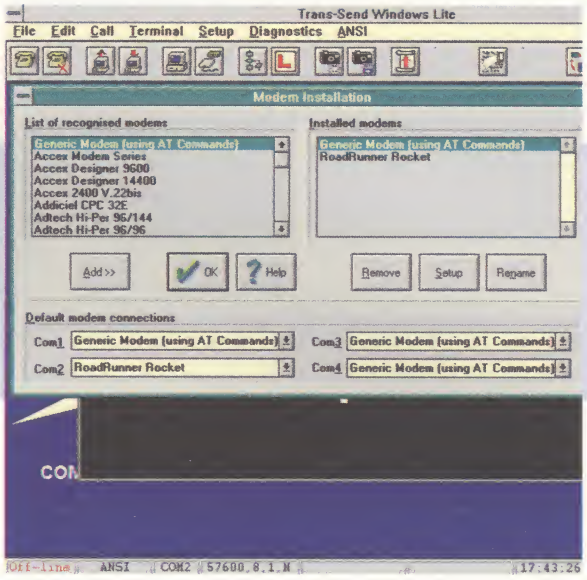
1993
W-Industries goes public and becomes Virtuality Inc. The new company begins work in earnest on the quest to design an affordable VR headset.

1993
Sega previews a low-cost VR headset at the Consumer Electronics Show.

1994
ICE and Forte announce sub-£600 PC headsets. Virtuality Inc teams up with IBM to produce new hardware. Many mainstream software companies sign up to develop VR versions of new titles

INFORMATION

Internet is a new buzzword which everyone's catching onto — millions of people are getting on line, joining the world's computers up in a mass of phone lines. This feature fills you in on what internet actually it is and how it can benefit you...



▲ This picture of a modem screen might not look that interesting but with it, you can access the whole world (nearly).

The Internet is, quite simply, the mother of all networks — a worldwide link up of millions of computers tied together by the phone lines. It's huge, it's still growing, and it's got so big that people have started giving it all sorts of weird names: the Information Super Highway, the Infobahn, even Cyberspace.

The basic idea is that all these computers round the world are hooked up so you can send messages and transfer files using a modem (a device for sending computer messages over the phone), a computer and a phone line. Everyone has an electronic mail (Email) address.

Over the years, a huge number of Bulletin Board Services (BBSs) have sprung up, often run by enthusiasts and offering all sorts of different facilities at local phone call rates.

A bulletin board is simply an place where you can electronically 'pin' information and software for other people to get at, and a meeting place for people to link up and talk.

Likewise there are the commercial bulletin boards, like Cix, CompuServe, Genie and Dragon, which exist by charging by the hour and organise a vast range of subjects, and huge amounts of software, into groups called forums.

These are usually the best way to get started because they're a lot easier to get around than the Internet itself, and a lot of the most popular stuff is immediately accessible without having to go look for it.

Once you're ready, you can dive into the Internet proper, because it's the Internet which links all these smaller commercial services, databases, private individuals and bulletin boards across the world. Depending on the software, it can be as simple as typing GO INTERNET.

WHAT'S IT WORTH?

"Yeah, okay, so 20 million people get off on talking to each other through computers. What's in it for me?" You may well ask.

Joining the Internet for the first time is a bit like gatecrashing a 24 hour party taking place in a room big enough to hold 20,000,000 people. You can talk to people on the other side of the planet in realtime, tapping messages back and forth. You don't have to know them, you just join in a conversation on any subject under the sun which interests you. You can skip from one subject to the next, leave messages, and come back at any time.And we do mean any subject under the sun. If it's weird, chances are that somewhere on the Internet there's a forum for it.

There are plenty of forums dedicated to games, too. If you want tips on a game, just ask someone in New Zealand or Greenland who's played it through. With this many people, someone's bound to know. If you want to know what the next game from, say, Origin or LucasArts is going to be, check out their forums — they're updated all the time.

Or you could issue a challenge for a game that works with a modem. When someone takes you up on it you exchange phone numbers and connect your computers. Fancy getting into a league or knockout competitions against people from all over the world? What's up, scared?

There are services you can access, from simple ones like weather reports, the latest football scores and so on, to telephone shopping and on-line multi-player games like Air Warrior. And soon, there will be movies and singles on demand, too.

But perhaps the best thing about the Internet is that it's like a worldwide electronic shop with an all-year January sale. If it can be stored electronically, it'll be on the Internet: shareware games, games updates, games demos, graphics and music software, video clips, still photographs, music demos, books, you name it.

When you've made your choices you simply download the files to your computer and hey presto! they're there on your hard disk ready for you to use: nine times out of ten all you've had to pay for is the time you spent on the phone.

Thousands of megabytes of software and information from across the globe are waiting for you. All you have to do is get on the Internet.

MULTI-PLAYER GAMING

Computers, no matter how bright you make them, are still predictable. Given time and a bit of skill, you can always beat them because they never learn. And then what? If you know, for example, that a Tie fighter always banks a certain way when you fire at him in such and such a way — then you're always going to get him. Once you know what the computer opponent is going to do the game is dead.

Playing against live opponents in a computer game you never know what's going to happen next. You only have to visit your local arcade and sit in the driver's seat of a game like Daytona, alongside three other drivers waiting for the green light to realise why this makes multi-player gaming so appealing.

Plenty of games have simple two-player options for just that reason. But in that type of two-player game you're both tied to the same screen, which isn't what you want.

What you want is the freedom to fly an F15 fighter with your friend as your wingman, race against each other through a whole Grand Prix season, or carve merry hell through a 3D dungeon side by side.

The easy way to do this is to connect up two computers with a serial or null-modem cable. These only costs a tenner or so from any local computer shop and doesn't send you a phone bill the size of the national defence budget at the end of the month. It's a great way to get in to head-to-head games.

But what if the person you want to play against lives 20 miles away? Then you need a modem so you can dial each other direct and play over the phone line. Of course, you've got to pay for the phone bill all the time you're on-line ...

There are plenty of games which support both modem and serial link play: F1GP, Falcon 3, IndyCar Racing, Wing Armada, Seawolf and Doom. In the pipeline, there are games like TFX, Doom 2, Pacific Air War, Transport Tycoon and Magic Carpet

WE WANT MORE!

That's still only two player stuff though. If you really want to take on all comers at your favourite game, beat the lot of them and then feel incredibly smug about it, you need to get on the Internet.

It's still early days, but already there are BBSs all over the Internet running an assortment of on-line games. All you need to do is dial up the 'host' which runs the particular game and join the fun.

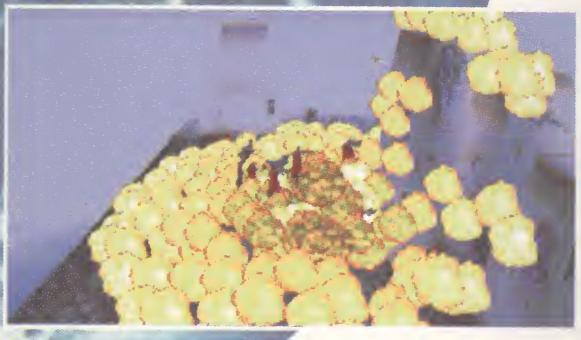
True, the games are often quite primitive, but there are multi-player flight sims, strategy games, MOOs and MUDs on the end of that phone line right now.

A MUD, by the way, is a Multi-User Dungeon. They're based on the old text adventure games from a few years back, and joining in is a bit like playing a game of Dungeons and Dragons. MOOs (MUD Object Orientated) are more sophisticated and the players can create their own virtual game worlds to play God in, from sci-fi to historical adventure. MUDs and MOOs are very popular on the Internet, and some people take them far to seriously for their own good.

One of the best known BBBs in the UK for this sort of thing is called On-Line. You pay a subscription to join, and can then jump straight into a space empire/trading game-

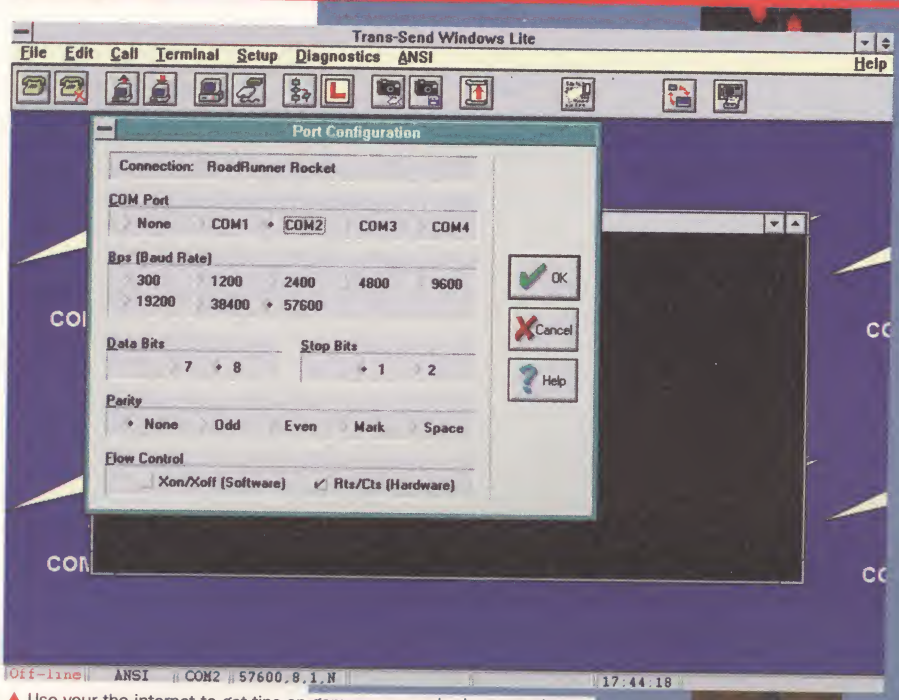






▲ Devlopers, Bullfrog have programmed their new PC offering Magic Carpet to work as a multi-player with up to a hundred people.

GLOBE-TROTTING



▲ Use your the internet to get tips on games — somebody, somewhere must know the answer.



▲ Get yourself a high-powered modems and make some friends. You can even send faxes from this little beaut.



called Federation, a dungeon called MUD2, or a multi-player WW2 flight sim called Air Warrior which can accommodate up to 65 flyers in a single game.



LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

On-line gaming hasn't taken off over here as quickly as it has over in the States for one simple reason — dosh. We have to pay for the time we spend playing games over local phone lines (calls which are free in the US).



And right now, the Government has banned BT and Mercury from running any on-line games or entertainment services. Miserable sods. But apparently this is so that others, particularly cable companies, get a chance to get their own games services up and running.

If you look at the sorts of companies with links to cable TV (like Time Warner, Paramount, Sony and so on) who are buying up software developers left right and centre, it doesn't take much to figure out that they're getting ready to join the action.

And despite the ban, Mercury has created a company called New Media Entertainment in order to launch a pay-by-the-hour national games network by the end of the year.

With this sort of big-money muscle interested in the idea of on-line entertainment, we shouldn't have long to wait for realtime, hi-tech multiplayer games.

You can beat computers every time, but where's the challenge in that? You can only beat people if you're good enough, and stay good enough. On-line gaming, not virtual reality, not 64-bit processors, real-time rendering or anything else, is the future of games. Probably...

WHO OWNS THIS INTERNET THING?

The Internet grew out of the military defence networks set up in America during the Cold War. It probably all started over 20 years ago with a conversation like this:

"Tell you what guys, I've got a great idea. Why don't we set up this massive electronic network so that the computers can talk to each other in the event of a nuclear war ... You know, after we've reduced the entire planet to radioactive rubble ..."

So, first it was the military, then scientists around the world who started chucking information around electronically. Universities, and business databases joined in. Then ordinary people working from home. It just grew and grew. Now, it's got so big that it's almost impossible to say exactly how many people use the Internet. The current estimate is about 20,000,000 people connected via over 2,000,000 million computers. Trouble is, it all started much by accident and it's still a bit of a mess. Nobody owns it, nobody runs it, it just gets bigger.

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

SUPER NINTENDO

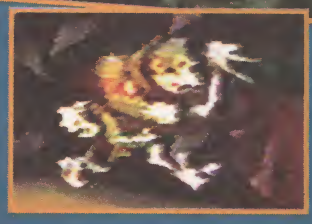
PLATFORM

PRICE £69.99









On the Super NES all roads seem to lead to Marioland. Well, this Christmas, Donkey Kong — Mario's oldest adversary — takes centre stage in the role of platform hero in Nintendo's most hyped release since the launch of Super FX and Starwing...

Like the FX chip, Donkey Kong Country, (or DKC to abbreviation fans), boasts technical innovation that should be enough to generate massive sales.

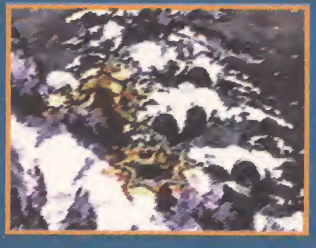
An air of mystery surrounds the techniques used to create the stunning rendered images, but the game is the work of Rare software, a respected team who have previously had honours on smashes like Zelda 3. Their intriguing 'Alias Animator' has been used to create the images on DKC, which have a higher resolution than any previous Super Nintendo game.

The intention is to take the Super NES a leap forward to compete with the 32-Bit contenders until Nintendo's own Ultra 64 arrives. The graphics set new standards of clarity, colour depth and animation for any system, and multiple layers of parallax scrolling and numerous professional special FX make it a feast for the eyes. Sound is similarly lavish, with jungle samples, screeches and digital stereo music.

However, it's not all cosmetic. There's 300 levels of ingenious platform game, which moves a lot faster and more instinctively than Mario games. There's a fair amount of variety with underwater sections, high-speed minecart sections and barrel-rolling. Donkey Kong is an extremely supple simian to control.

Of course all this comes at a premium — £70 to be exact, which means for most people DKC will be the beginning and the end of their Christmas games-buying spree. However Nintendo is confident if you get this game you won't want to touch anything else over the festive season, and it is a 24MEG cart. Besides, it's the one console title that everyone is talking about.







▲ Climbing ropes is just one of the feats of' monkey-face must perform.



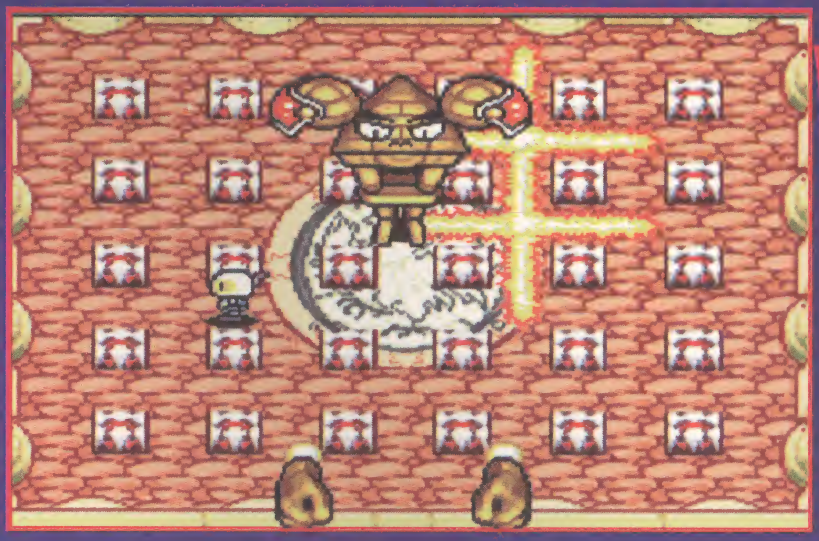




MEGA

■ MEGADRIVE
■ BLOW 'EM UP
■ PRICE: £34.99

One of the hottest games for Christmas '94 is a remarkable coup for Sega and Megadrive owners. Hudsonsoft's Bomberman series is one of the best incentives for buying a Super Nintendo, the addictive and innovative gameplay previously denied to Sega formats. But no more, Sega have secured Mega Bomberman, which boasts more features than any previous incarnation.

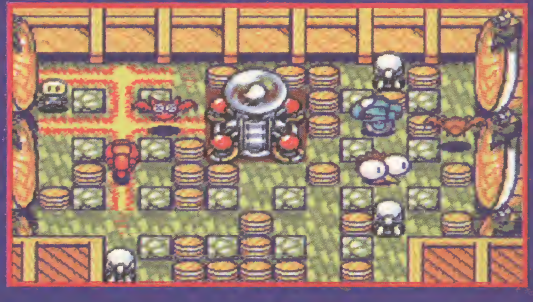


The lone player and multi-player options of Mega Bomberman are radically different, but they have the bomb-laying bomberman character at their heart. He plants a trail of short-fused bombs that will destroy anything exploding within their range (including the planter). In the single player adventure game, Bomberman traverses a five-stage scenic world, laying bombs in strategic patterns to destroy walls and creatures, in a bid to secure amulet pieces.

Once collected, the pieces activate hideous (and hilarious) cartoon bosses. Radio controlled be-fanged bananas are just one of the obstacles on the psychedelic journey.

But Bomberman excites more with its multi-player option, accessed by the Sega Tap. Up to four bomber-people (there's at least one identifiable girlie) play in a claustrophobic arena laying bombs in a bid to blow the company into smithereens and be the sole survivor.







▲ There's loads going on at once on-screen in Mega Bomberman — a real programming triumph for saying its only 8MEG.

A maze of walls separates the players at first, but as bricks explode they leave tasty bonuses, granting more bombs, greater explosive power or even passing a virus onto the recipient. All adds to the confusion and the adrenalin of the game. It's fun, frantic and soon begins to take over your life.

Hudsonsoft has not stinted on new ideas, despite this being the first Megadrive instalment of Bomberman. Their most radical innovation comes in the form of donkeys reared from strange eggs. Hudsonsoft insist the multi-coloured animals are donkeys although they look just like kangaroos...That's as maybe, but in effect they grant even more useful powers, depending on their colour — jumping abilities, lobbing abilities, and for the first time, power to shunt the maze blocks across the playfield.





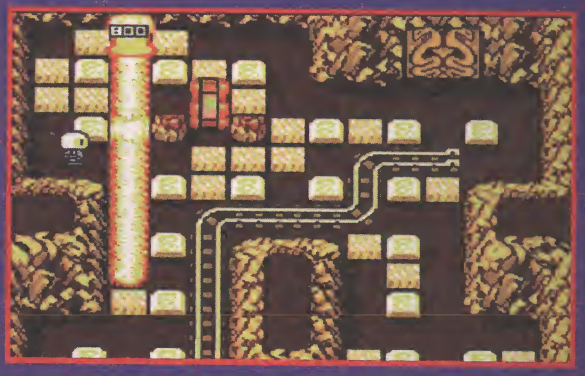
BOMBERMAN



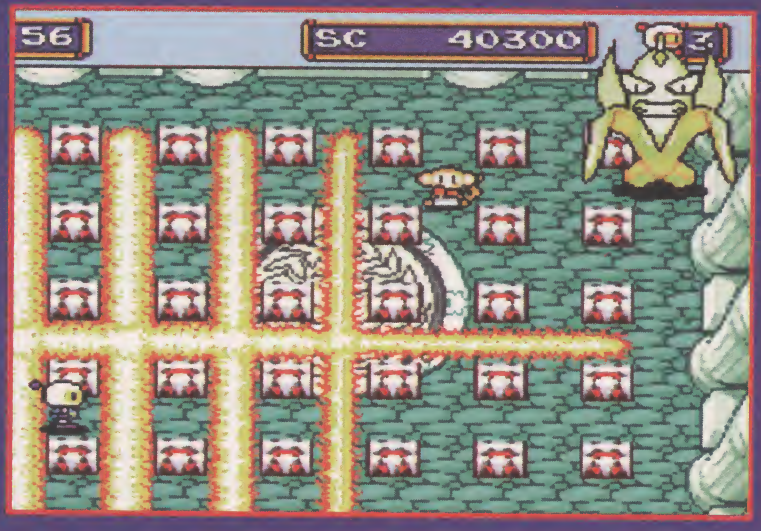


SO MUCH FOR SO LITTLE

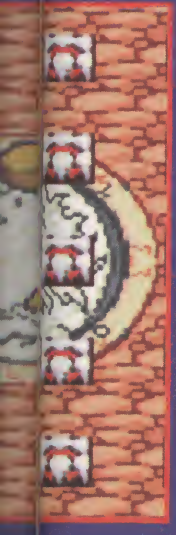
Bomberman should raise interest not only on the brand name, but the box price. You don't see many Megadrive games for £34.99 these days. Sega has kept the price rock bottom by improved manufacturing methods, and the fact the game is skillfully squeezed onto an 8MEG cart. That doesn't mean it's anything less than an AA-title — just that it's a bargain one!













YOU GET MORE WITH FOUR

The multi-player game is set across various backdrops, the plain one allowing you to get a feel for the game, but more demanding screens add elements from the scenery. Haunted house level has a series of warping trapdoors, swamp level has areas obscured by creepers, making it hard to detect bombs, and conveyor belts affect the positioning of your unexploded incendiaries. Backdrops are just one of a plethora of custom options on the cart.

■ ALL FORMATS
■ PLATFORM
■ PRICE TBA

In Tarzan's day, a trip down to the local elephants' graveyard was no laughing matter. Nowadays, fill it up with a few less than amiable hyenas and, if you don't manage to live through it, you'll be a complete laughing stock...







▲Simba's all grown up now and is ready to face the world — that's if he can bother to wake up and get to his feet, of course.



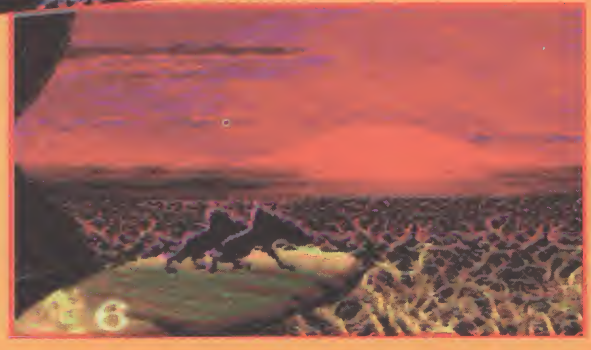
Family values! That's what modern life is all about. Get through the first level of a lot of today's games and you're already being taught about the environment, life's cycle and the way things should be... man! All well and good, but if we're going to take all that in, we should at least be treated to some lavish backdrops and some peachy gameplay along the way.

Fortunately, by the look of The Lion King so far, we've got both! The interactive game follows the movie script pretty much as closely as you can get. What? You haven't seen it yet? Okay, let's fill you in.

Picture it. Deep in the darkest African jungle; the drums are beating wildly (sorry, I'll turn the stereo down); the animal kingdom is gathered to welcome the latest addition to its number. All is tense, all is mild, round yon virgin..no, wrong story. Basically, The Lion King centres around Simba, the young lion cub and son of the jungle King, Mufasa. In an ideal world, Mufasa would live to a ripe old age, kick off his slippers and pass his helm to the rightful heir. However, when has a real story ever turned out that way?

True to form, there in the background lurks Scar (whose voice over is done by Jeremy Irons in the cartoon), the black sheep of Mr and Mrs. Lion's family and brother to the king and, if he doesn't want to kill everybody else off and become lord and master himself, I'll be a monkey's uncle (okay, cut the jokes!).





The story centres around the fight for justice and learning about true friendship, honour and loyalty along the way. As the young cublet, you form your first friendship with Nala, a young lioness who's destined to share most of your screentime. Lured by the temptation of adventure, you, as young Simba (the prince in waiting) are lured to the spooky elephants' graveyard, where the first hint of action kicks in with the appearance of the laughing hyenas.

They're a manic lot, these hyenas, and they certainly don't want to give you an easy ride of it, but you can always rely on good old dad to help you out. Sadly, you can't do this for too long as Scar does away with your old Pa in no uncertain terms (don't you just hate it when that happens).

▶ The Disney-esque cartoon graphics have translated brilliantly onto the console formats as this Megadrive shot of young Simba in mid-roar shows.

ION ING

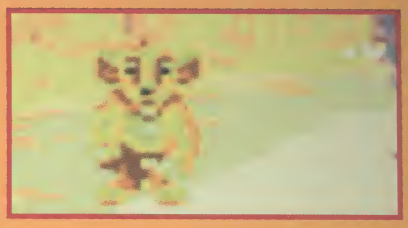
ANIMAL MAGIC

After daddy dies you're on your own in a hefty 24MEG platform adventure set against wildebeest charges, jungle gorges, forest fires and..ugh..bug-eating, as you fight to regain your rightful position as Lord of the Jungle.

Disney artists drew some 2,000 new frames of animation after the movie to make this game work, and it shows. The scenery looks truly breathtaking and each of the characters, from the wise old baboon Rafiki, to your friends and allies Pumbaa the warthog and Timon the Meerkat, are superbly animated.

As Scar forces you into the wilderness after your father's death, where you meet your allies, the stage is then set for a touch of self-discovery before you're ready for the final showdown with the villain. This means The Lion King has two distinct stages, a sort of young and old, before and after, feel as you grow up as Simba.

Each of these two stages has five main levels, not to mention the host of bonus stages, and there looks like more than enough action to keep you on your toes throughout. If controlling Simba weren't enough, tackling Scar's minions and the usual rigours of the jungle, you can also control Pumbaa and Timon to boot, in a parallax-scrolling outing that's as smooth as you like and just as beautifully presented. Disney and Virgin have spent a lot of time and money on this one and from first impressions, it might just pay off.



THREE'S A CROWD?

If your idea of fun is taking on a host of bad beasties on your own, you can forget it in The Lion King. This one's all about learning the value of true friendships and the trust of others. Escaping the hyenas and dodging the flailing hooves of wildebeest are possible on your own, but if you want to survive against the ravages of Scar and still survive to face him in the final showdown, you've got to learn to control a bumbling warthog and a hyperactive meerkat as well. If that sounds like fun, believe me, it is! Each of the characters are suited to different tasks, and it's your job to sort out which if you want to get on. After all, it's a jungle out there!







JIM O'FARACTER...

..He has no character! What? You've never heard that old chestnut? Well, the same might be said of the game, after a fashion. The characters in this one are extremely well defined, but as the game follows the movie so closely, you really should see the film first to have a real empathy with the creatures involved. Rafiki is the wizened old baboon, who bears you aloft for the animal kingdom to behold after your birth and should be regarded with some respect. As for Zazu, the flustered old hornbill who acts as advisor to your father Mufasa, well, if you think he's wise, on your own head be it. All the way through the game, the main characters are provided with superb backdrops for their own style of comic behaviour. Even the hideous hyenas are good for a few laughs, in their own inimitable style, of course.



▲Leaping gorillas are just some of the foes that young Simba has to face on his vast voyage around the circle of life before he can finally take up his post as King.

DOOM 2:

■ PC and PC-CD
■ SHOOT 'EM UP
■ £TBC

Whoever said video games were violent obviously hasn't got round to Doom just yet. Violent? It wasn't violent! It was downright vicious! And if you liked it the first time around, come 'ere... there's more!

What is it about these people who rant and rave about the shortcomings in video games? I mean, on they go about games like Mortal Kombat, they have their say and then they saunter off to rant about their latest favourite — pornography. Meanwhile, out saunters a delicate little offering called Doom which, shall we say, makes MK feel like you're cuddling up to two soft, fluffy bunnies in front of a warm fireplace and playing marbles with your granny (who's letting you win anyway, 'cos you're her favourite), and not a single "Ooh, I ask you!" or "I'm writing to my MP!" to be heard.

Which is all well and good, really, because whatever your feelings about violence in games, Doom was quite simply the best shoot 'em up to see the light of day this year; excellent 3D scrolling, real atmosphere, big, ugly nasties and some huge maps to explore while you doled out death with your handguns, photon blasters and chainsaw.

So what happens next? You guessed it: Doom 2: Hell on Earth. And what do we get? More blood-curdling violence at the end of your favourite weapon, more maps to explore and a host of new demons to blow away. What do you expect? This is war, you know.

WE'RE ALL DOOOOOMED!

The original Doom saw you returning to Earth, having wiped out the last of the demons, or so you thought. But, if you've played the original, you might have noticed that fluffy rabbit head on a stick at the end, and guessed there was more to come.

Forget your hero's welcome in Doom 2. Instead, as soon as you get back to Earth, you find the city has been overrun by the evil hordes, and your first job is to blow the bad guys back to hell, where they belong. Survive that and you're off



to the Demons' fortress to prove to them, at the end of a very sharp stick, that leaving home was a bad move in the first place.

Sadly, these guys aren't blessed in the grey cell-stakes, so your next stop is to find the express portal to hell to finish the job once and for all. One thing's for sure, if you've played Doom, Doom 2 is certainly more of the same. That's not a bad thing, though. As we said, Doom was far and away the most impactive game of '94 and, if you can't beat it, beef it up, which is exactly what ID has done.

On the weapons front, you'll be pleased to hear there's a very juicy double-barrelled shotgun up for grabs in the sequel. As if cutting evil foot-soldiers in half wasn't enough, now you can blow them halfway down the street as well!

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

If you thought the opposition were a touch lame in Doom (do what?!), just wait 'til you meet the Mancubus or the ArchVile in a dark corridor in Doom 2. This time around, there's no hiding behind pillars or scooting off around corners. Bump into the Skeleton crew with their bendy fireballs and nowhere is safe, not even those very private, tender spots, if you get my drift.

With over 30 massive new maps, survival is a real problem in Doom 2. The city street levels at the start of the game look mighty impressive and the castle looks a real challenge.

Overall, ID has certainly tweaked the Doom engine, making the game look and feel a lot smoother, but some of the better benefits in Doom 2 must be the new network options. Doom alone is good, but playing it with some mates is a peach. In Doom 2, you can get up to eight people playing at any one time, with all of the earlier upgrade changes of the original available as options in the sequel. Get yourself hooked into the network and you'll soon be warping between levels, recreating objects and even doing away with the monsters as you chase each other to hell and back.

With even more false doors and walls, more switches, corridors and maps, not to mention quadruple the nasties, Doom 2: Hell on Earth looks a surefire winner.



▲Revenant the demon has shoulder-mounted homing missile launchers so you can't hide round corners.

HELL ON EARTH

ONTO A HIDING

There are hundreds more switches, buttons, sliding panels and false doors in Doom 2 than in the original, and you'll need to find a lot of them to stay alive, so keep your strategy head on while you're blasting. The city level also features new outdoor sections, with tons of hiding places for the evil hordes. Never trust doorways, windows or the rooftops of the tall buildings as you wind through the streets. One step out of line and there'll be an imp, sergeant or demon just gagging to separate your body from your immortal soul. You have been warned!







▲ Like the original, these guys don't give an inch — one minute you're alone dreaming of dinner or something, the next you're surrounded. So keep your finger on the trigger and keep blasting!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU..

It's always friendlier if you're acquainted with the beasts you're about to blow away, so here's a quick run-down of some of the new opponents you can expect to mow down during your descent to hell:

The Hell Knights: Like the ones in the original, but they seem easier to chop up.

Arachnoids: Pretty much the same as the original.

The Chaingun Dude: Carries some heavy duty ammo, but not the worst you'll meet.

The Mancubus: Nasty! It's a fat thing with big guns, big arms and scrawny legs, though you might be more put off by the farting noises!

The ArchVile: Tall, lanky white things that drag up hell fire from the ground and could make your friends queasy if they don't like you well done.

The Cacodemon: Particularly pleasant — this one shoots the screaming heads of lost souls at you.

The Revenants: Anorexic souls these. Basically, these are the skeletons with the bendy bullets, so don't turn your back on them in a hurry.



PAIN ELEMENTAL



MANACUBUS



DEMON



REVENANT

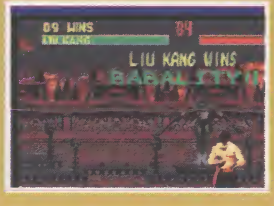
MORTAL KOMBAT – THE ULTIMATE GUI

GUEST STARS

Yes, Jade, Smoke, and Noob Saibot do exist but it ain't easy to access them. Here's how to do it:
JADE:In the stage below the "?", win one round using only Low Kicks.
SMOKE:During the Portal Stage, when a "Toasty!" appears, immediately hold DOWN and press START.
NOOB SAIBOT:Win 25 bouts in a row, with the last bout against a second player.

LUI KANG





Special Moves:

High Fireball – F, F, HP
Low Fireball – F, F, LP
Flying Kick – F, F, HK
Bicycle Kick – Hold LK for five seconds and release



▲ Lui Kang Friendship move.

Finishing Moves:

Dragon Morph – D, F, B, B and HK (up close)
Wheel – Hold Block, 360 degree circle away
Pit Fatality – B, B, F and LK
Babality – D, D, F, B and LK
Friendship – F, B, B, B and LK



▲ Lui Kang Dragon Finishing move.

KUNG LAO





Special Moves:

Hat Throw – B, F, LP
Whirlwind Spin – Hold Block, U, U, LK
Mid-Air Kick – D and HK in mid-air
Teleport – D, U



▲ Kung Lao Friendship move.

Finishing Moves:

Slice-in-Two – Hold Block, F, F, F, LK
Hat Decapitation – Hold LP, B, B, F, Release LP
Pit Fatality – F, F, F AND HP
Babality – B, B, F, F and HK
Friendship – B, B, B, D and HK



▲ Kung Lao Hat Decap move.



II DE

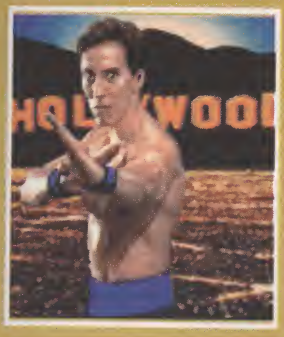
At last it's here! Mortal Kombat II must have been the most eagerly awaited game of the year, and Computer and Video Games: The Essential Guide is proud to present the definitive guide to this console blood-fest. Feast your eyes on the Specials, but more importantly gasp at the range of ace Fatalities, weird Babalities, and odd Friendships. All that is left to say is...FIGHT!

KEY TO CONTROLS

Here is the guide to the controls. To save time and space, the commands have been abbreviated, and are as follows:

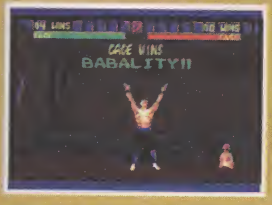
B – Back
F – Forward
U – Up
D – Down
HK – High Kick
LK – Low Kick
HP – High Punch
LP – Low Punch

JOHNNY CAGE



Special Moves:

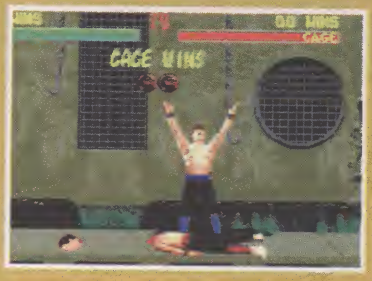
High Energy Trail – 1/2 Circle Away and HP
Low Energy Trail – 1/2 Circle Towards and HP
Shadow Uppercut – B, D, B, and HP
Shadow Kick – B, F, and LK
Package Check – Block and LP

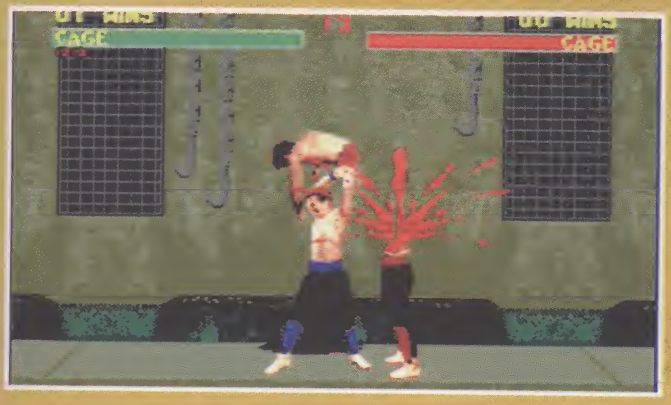




Finishing Moves:

Torso Rip – D, D, F, F and HP (up close)
Decapitation – F, F, D, U (up close)
Pit Fatality – D, D, D and HK
Babality – B, B, B and HK
Friendship – D, D, D, D and HK





SCORPION



Special Moves:

Spear – B, B, LP
Decoy – 1/4 Circle Away and HP
Scissor Kick – 1/2 Circle Away and LK
Mid-Air Throw – Block when in mid-air





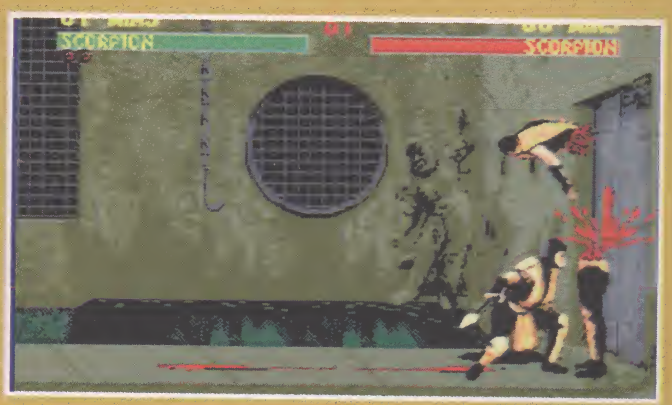
▲ Scorpion Friendship move.

Finishing Moves:

Flambéd – Hold Block, U, U and HP (up close)
Spear Slice – Hold HP, D, F, F, F, Release HP (up close)
Pit Fatality – B, F, F and Block
Babality – D, B, B and HK
Friendship – B, B, D and HK



▲Scorpion Faméd move.



SUB ZERO



Special Moves:

Freeze – 1/4 Circle Towards and LP
Ground Freeze – 1/4 Circle Away and LK
Slide – B and Block and LK and LP

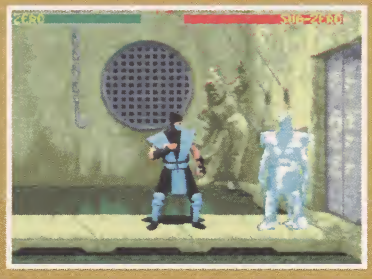


▲ Sub Zero Friendship move.



Finishing Moves:

Ice Grenade – Hold LP, B, B, D, F, Release LP
Freeze and Shatter – F, F, D and HK. F, D, F, F and HP (up close)
Pit Fatality – D, F, F and Block
Babality – D, B, B and HK
Friendship – B, B, D and HK



▲ Sub Zero Ffreeze 'n' Shatter move.





▲ Sub Zero Ice Grenade Move.

SHANG TSUNG



Special Moves:

One Fireball – B, B and HP
Two Fireballs – B, B, F and HP
Three Fireballs – B, B, F, F and HP
Morph to Lui Kang – B, F, F and Block
Morph to Kung Lao – B, D, B and HK
Morph to Johnny Cage – B, B, D and LP
Morph to Scorpion – Hold Block, U, U
Morph to Sub-Zero – F, D, F and HP
Morph to Kitana – Block, Block, Block
Morph to Jax – D, F, B and HK
Morph to Mileena – Hold U
Morph to Baraka – D, D and LK
Morph to Reptile – Hold Block, U, D and LP
Morph to Raiden – D, B, F and LK

Finishing Moves:

Human Vacuum – Hold HK for three seconds and release near victim
Soul Sacrifice – Hold Block, U, D, U and LK
Kintaro Morph – Hold LP for fifteen seconds
Pit Fatality – Hold Block, D, D, U, D
Babality – B, F, D and HK
Friendship – B, B, D, F and HK



▲ Shang Tsung Friendship move.





KITANA



Special Moves:

Fan Swipe – B and HP
Fan Throw – F, F, LP and HP
Fan Lift – B, B, B and HP
Square Wave Punch – 1/4 Circle Away and HP







Finishing Moves:

Decapitation – Block, Block, Block and HK (up close)
Kiss of Death – Hold LK, F, F, D, F, Release LK (up close)
Pit Fatality – F, D, F and HK
Babality – D, D, D and LK
Friendship – D, D, D, U and LK

▲ Kitana Fan Swipe move.





JAX



Special Moves:

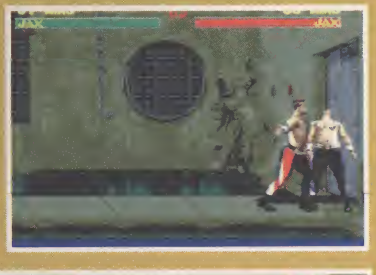
Ground Pound – Hold LK for three seconds and release
Backbreaker – Block when both mid-air
Sonic Wave – 1/2 Circle Away and HK
Grab – F, F, LP. Keep hitting LP for five hits
Super Slam – LP while doing Normal Slam





Finishing Moves:

Head Clap – Hold LP, F, F, F and Release LP (up close)
Mostly 'Armless – Block, Block, Block, Block, LP
Pit Fatality – Hold Block, U, U, D, and LK
Babality – D, D, D and LK
Friendship – D, D, D, U and LK







REPTILE

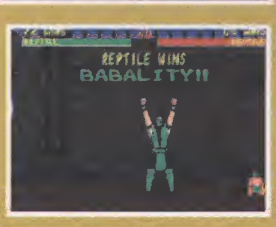


Special Moves:

Acid Spit – F, F and HP
Orb – B, B and LP, HP
Slide – B and Block and LK and LP
Invisibility – Block and U, U, Release Block, D, LP



▲ Reptile Friendship move.

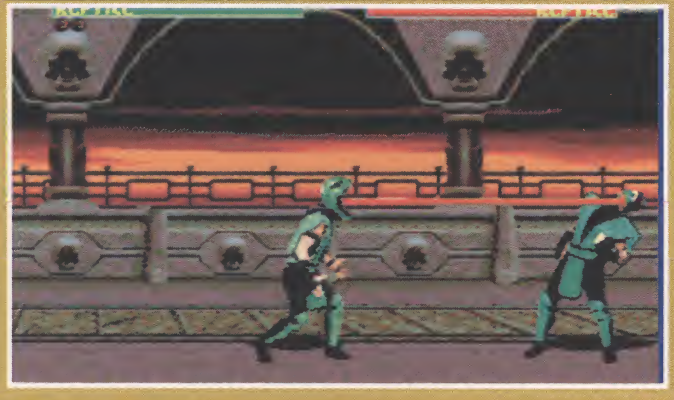


Finishing Moves:

ITongue Lash – B, B, D and LP (from 1/2 screen away)
Invisible Kill – Use Invisibility Move and F, F, D and HK
Pit Fatality – D, F, F and Block
Babality – D, B, B and LK
Friendship – B, B, D and LK



▲ Reptile Invisible Kill move.





RAYDEN



Special Moves:

Special Moves:
Lightning Toss – 1/4 Circle towards and LP
Dive Attack – B, B, F
Teleport – D, U
Shocker – Hold HP for three seconds, release





Finishing Moves:

Super Shocker – Hold LK (up close), release pressing LK repeatedly
Super Punch – Hold HP for six seconds (up close)
Pit Fatality – U, U and HP
Babality – D, D, U and HK
Friendship – D, B, F and HK







MILEENA



Special Moves:

Roll Attack – B, B, D and HK
Sai-Toss – Hold HP for two seconds and release
Teleport Kick – F, F and LK



▲ Mileena Friendship move.



Finishing Moves:

Stab Frenzy – F, B, F and LP (up close)
De-Boned – Hold HK for three seconds, release (up close)
Pit Fatality – F, D, F and LK
Babality – D, D, D and HK
Friendship – D, D, D, U and HK



▲ Mileena in a stab frenzy.





BARAKA



Special Moves:

Special Moves:
Double Kick – HK twice (up close)
Blade Swipe – B and HP
Blade Fury – B, B, B and LP
Blade Spark – 1/4 Circle Away and HP

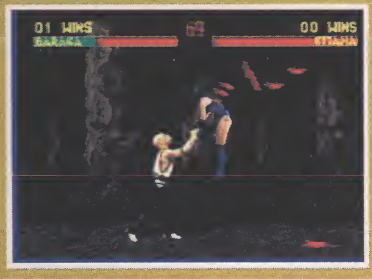


▲ Baraka Friendship move.



Finishing Moves:

Decapitation – B, B, B and HP (up close)
Skewered – B, F, D, F and LP (up close)
Pit Fatality – F, F, D and HK
Babality – F, F, F and HK
Friendship – Hold Block, U, F, F and HK



▲ Baraka's deadly skewer move.





▲ It's knives out aplenty as Baraka goes for the kill against Mileena.

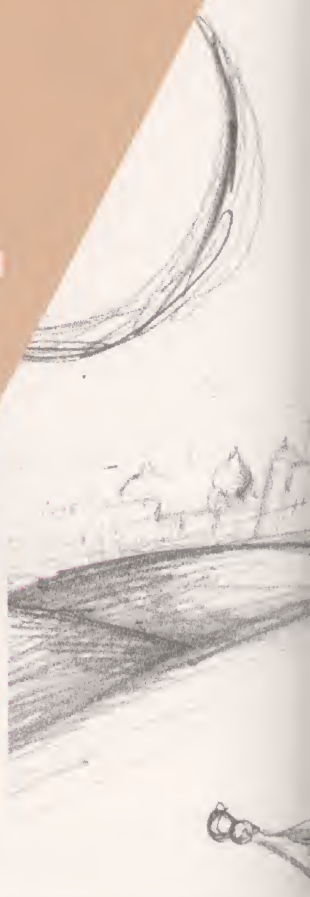
BULLFROG PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS...

THE MAGIC CARPET

DIARY OF A GAME

Some ideas for games come to the creator in a blinding flash of revelation — often inspired by several pints of Old Tub Thumber — but more often than not, they're collaborations which evolve over months, coming from a dedicated team of individuals with a single aim — to produce the world's best computer game! Here's a month by month run down of the trials and tribulations the guys and gals at Bullfrog Productions went through to come up with their latest masterpiece...





MARCH 1993

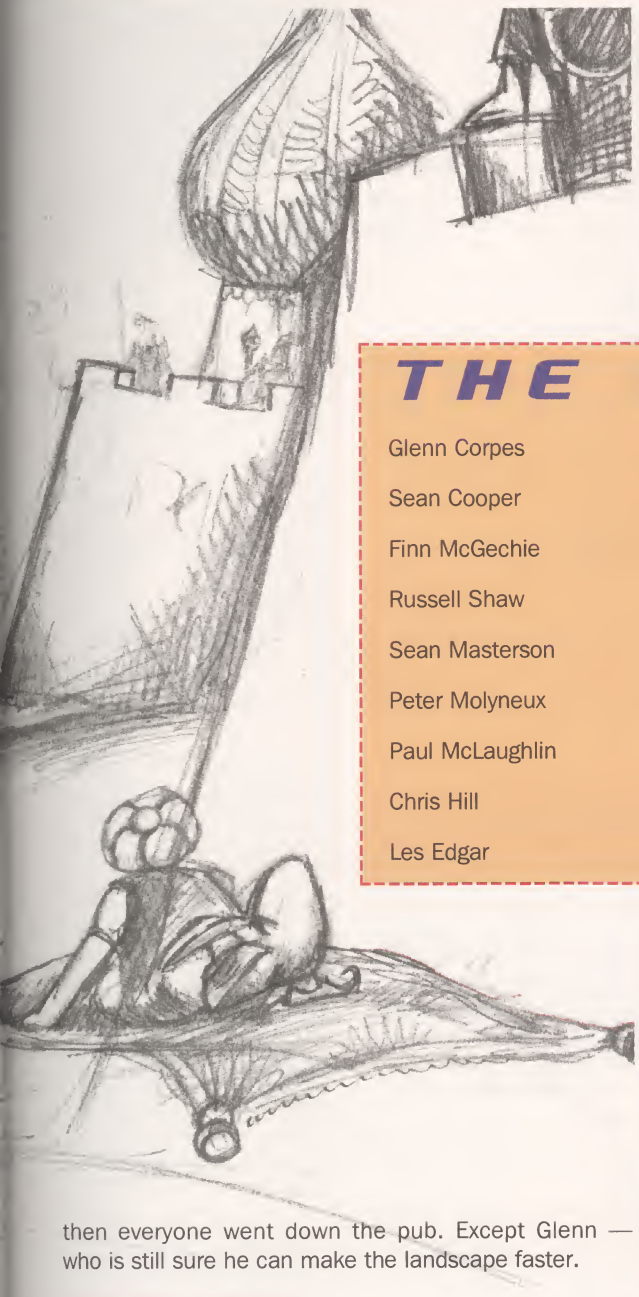
Glenn had been sulking for some time, over the latest flight sim that had come into the office — given that he couldn't work out how the exactly how the 3D was so fast.

At the end of another project — he had a little time on his hands — so after a period of frantic coding — the Friday company meeting was treated to ... Glenn's souped up all-new 3D system. "God, that looks crap," was the chorus... back to the drawing board.

MAY 1993

This time Glenn concentrated on using textured bitmaps on the polygon 3D landscape to ensure a more realistic landscape without having too much complexity on-screen. This time it worked , really well — it truly looked like the view from a plane flying over a snow swept surface. Back to the Friday meeting... the assembled company was impressed and was shocked into silence (or at least burps — too much coke). "What about doing a flight sim?" suggested a minion. (His body parts were later discovered in a sewer).

No, Bullfrog was too cool to do a fascist flight sim. The awesome combined intellect of 50 of the finest minds in the universe assailed the task. Until 5.30 that is,





THE CAST

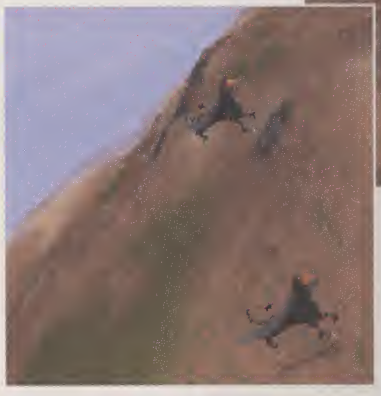
Glenn Corpes	Engine Designer
Sean Cooper	Lead Programmer
Finn McGechie	Lead Artist
Russell Shaw	Musician
Sean Masterson	Level Designer
Peter Molyneux	Creative Director
Paul McLaughlin	Head of Art Department
Chris Hill	Intro Graphics
Les Edgar	Managing Director



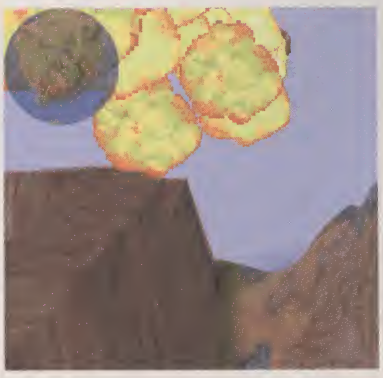
▲ The mythical city has been nicely drawn out by this stage and — lo and behold — we have people onscreen. Wow!



◀ Bzzzz, bzzzzzzz, busy bee, do what you like but don't sting me! Somebody, somewhere thought it'd be a good idea to slap a bee in there— and why not, eh?







▲ Boom, boom, shake the room... or at least create some earth-shattering explosions over a barren landscape.



then everyone went down the pub. Except Glenn — who is still sure he can make the landscape faster.

JUNE 1993

After much brainstorming, the Bullfrog collective unconscious has finally decided that the neatest idea would be to make the game based on a Magic Carpet... Paul and Finn in the art department start working on some outline ideas and sprites. Russell comes up with some great Magic Carpet mood music. Glenn is still working on how he can make the landscape faster.

AUGUST 1993

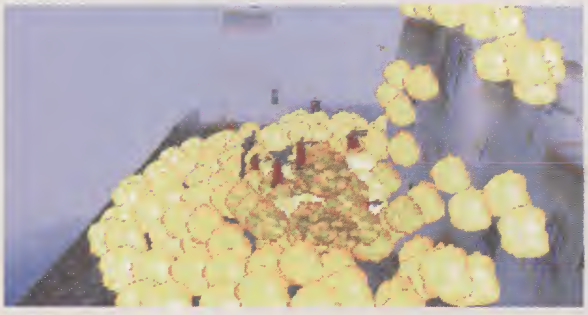
The screen now has a central sprite character which 'surfs' on a flapping carpet and a minimal number of baddie sprites (which scale in realtime). It looks pretty good. Glenn is still working on how he can make the landscape faster.





▲ The art department spent many laborious months with pencil and paper sketching out their ideas for the game's look.





SEPTEMBER 1993

With Syndicate finished, Peter decides more resources need to go onto Carpet. More art = more sprites, also new textures. The Friday meeting thinks they look a bit crap. Back to the drawing board (and mouse...). Glenn is now working on a hi-res version of the 3D engine and tools to generate landscape and levels.

OCTOBER 1993

Sean C starts on the project in earnest — suddenly the figure in the centre of the screen looks a bit lame. What if we take it out? We do — it looks better. Cool... Finn draws the new textures to go into the game. Some think it looks better — some think it looks worse.

DECEMBER 1993

Tools start to come together and the Bullfrog Artifical Intelligence system is beginning to get integrated into the code. Baddies start doing intelligent things like shooting back at you and coming in late on Monday morning. Glenn is still working on how he can make the landscape faster.

MARCH 1993

Gameplay is beginning to crystallise big time. Mana, Magic and Mayhem is the order of the day. The idea of a Pentium version comes up. Super fast, super hi-res, realtime reflections.

JUNE 1994

The pace is hotting up as Theme Park is almost out the door and the whole resources of Bullfrog are brought to bear on this project. Sean M begins the levels in earnest. Peter and Sean C figure out gameplay and strategy after many mammoth battles over the network. The 3D engine is looking fantastic and Glenn is beginning to look bored again. Sound and music now starts to kick into place.

JULY 1994

This is it — the buttons have been pressed to make this a Christmas product. That means it must be finished by the end of September. Sean C pales visibly and chains himself to his keyboard. Levels continue to be designed and playtested like mad, with Sean M fighting to get the right balance across 50 levels. The art department are halfway through the impressive 'movie' sequence. Even the Les, managing director, takes time off from beating up the bank manager to get into playtesting.

AUGUST 1994

Sean Cooper is still chained to the keyboard — working with a frightening intensity. This game is going to be

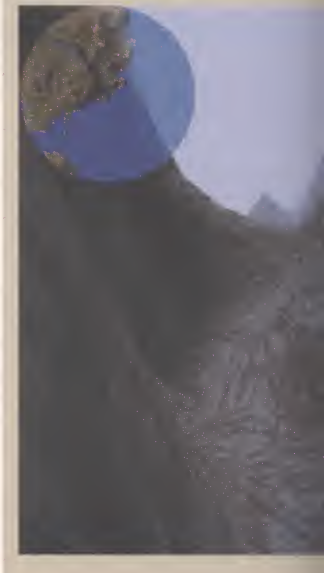


▲ Hey man, why use a magic carpet w you've got hot air balloons? In the wor the Stones — it's gas, gas, gas...



▼ Sinister baddies on a sureal landsc do not a good game make... but by 'e lad, it's a good start.





perfect. The whole team is at fever pitch, working together as if choreographed — a well oiled, highly sophisticated, intricate assembly of commitment, guts and inspiration. If only England played like this! Someone sends Bullfrog a VR helmet. We get it working with Carpet in two hours. Smug or wot???

SEPTEMBER 1994

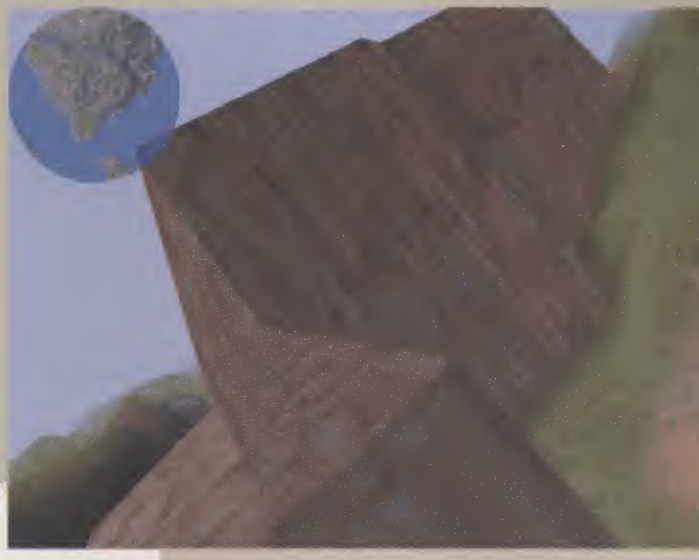
Big trade show time. Peter M does constant demos to the press for three days — St John's Ambulance are on hand to revive those that pass out with astonishment. They are busy — it's the hit of the Show. Electronic Arts, our distributors, drool at the mouth in anticipation of massive global sales. The troops back at Bullfrog continue to debug, tweak levels and hone the game into the best it can possibly be. Art is finished and finalised — the opening movie is fantastic. It goes into QA (quality assurance) — it passes. We all go home and crash out. It's an anti-climax — as it won't go on sale for weeks.

OCTOBER 1994

End of project party. The first reviews have come in — they are all amazing. At last — we can celebrate... and then get on with all the other versions.



▲ Wow man — look at that fractually generated map in the corner... and that texture mapping... Phew!







▲ Goodness gracious great balls of fire!







▲ You might take the superb in-game perspective for granted, but believe us a lot of work and maths goes into it.

HELP LINE!

You got a problem with a game? Or perhaps you want some game info. Either way, here's a comprehensive guide — complete with telephone phone numbers — to where you can find the makers of your machines and games.

HARDWARE

3DO
0101 415 261 3000

ATARI
0753 533344

BBC ENTERPRISES
081 743 5588

COMMODORE UK
0628 770088/779681

NINTENDO
0329 822565

NINTENDO HQ
(206) 882 2040

PANASONIC
071 637 8046

SEGA OF AMERICA
Tel: (415) 508 2800

SEGA UK
071 3733000

SONY
071 911 8646

SOFTWARE

21ST CENTURY ENTERTAINMENT
0235 851852

ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT INC.
(201) 818 4800

ANCO
0322 292513

ACCLAIM
071 344 5000

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081 788 0200

ACTIVISION
0295 252524

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0977 797777

ARGONAUT
081 200 5777

BANDAI
0329 828011

BINARY ASYLUM
0225 428 494

BULLFROG PRODUCTIONS
0483 579399

BMG INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT UK
Tel: 071 973 0011

CAPCOM USA INC,
0101 408 774 0500

CODEMASTERS
0926 814132

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0332 297797

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CYBERFLIX
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DOMARK
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DELPHINE
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DIGITAL INTEGRATION
0276 684959

DID
0928 566616

DATA EAST
071 828 3201

ELECTRONIC ARTS
0753 549442

ELECTROCOIN
071 637 5375/ 071631 1189

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INTERPLAY
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IREM CORPORATION
010 81 6 535 4885

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KRISALIS
0709 372290

KONAMI
0895 853000

LUCAS ARTS
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NAMCO
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MARUBENI
071 826 8816

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MILLENIUM
0223 844894

MINDSCAPE
0444 246333

MIRAGE
0260 299909

OCEAN
061 832 6633

PROBE
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PSYGNOSIS
051 709 5755

RENEGADE
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SENSIBLE SOFTWARE
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SONY
071 911 8646

SONY IMAGESOFT
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SUNSOFT
(81) 587-55-3500

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THQ
071 493 3662

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0924 291867

TIME WARNER
0604 602800

US GOLD
021 356 3388

UBISOFT
081 343 9055

VIC TOKAI
0604 671415

VIRGIN
081 960 2255

VIRGIN USA
(714) 833 8710

CVG ULTIMATE TOP TEN

Thousands of games have come and gone but very few stick out as being all time classic which form the basis upon which other games are always compared (and more, often than not, based on or cloned from) . We've done our best to compile a list of the best of the best — which have stood the test of time and are still regarded as classics today. There's quite a few to choose from so it was no mean feat but here they are, in no particular order:

DEFENDER (COIN-OP)

MORTAL KOMBAT II (SUPER NES)

ELITE (BBC)

STREETFIGHTER II (COIN-OP/ SUPER NES)

TEMPEST 2000 (JAGUAR)

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (MEGADRIVE)

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SUPER MARIO WORLD (SUPER NES)

DONKEY KONG (COIN-OP)

CIVILISATION (PC)

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